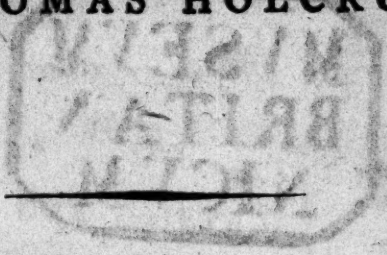


ANNA ST. IVES:

A NOVEL.

By THOMAS HOLCROFT.



VOLUME V.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHEPPERSON AND REYNOLDS,
NO. 137, OXFORD-STREET.

M.DCC.XCII.

16

ANNA ST. LIVES:

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ANNA ST. IVES:

A NOVEL.

LETTER LXXX.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover-Street.

BEFORE you proceed with my letter, Fairfax, read the inclosed paper *!—Read!—The hand-writing is

* A copy given by Anna to Clifton, as she had promised him, of all that she had said in her last conversation.

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B

hers!

hers!—It is addressed to me! Was repeated to me! Is transcribed for me!—Transcribed by herself!—Read! And if it be possible believe in your own existence! Believe if you can that all you see, all you hear, the images that swim before your eyes and the world itself are real, and no delusion!—For my part I begin to doubt!—Read!—Oh that I were invisible and standing by your side!

Well!—Have you ended?—And do you still continue to breathe?—Are you not a statue?—Would not the whole universe denounce me liar if, knowing me, I were to tell it that words like these were not only spoken to me but are written,

written, lest I should forget the maddening injuries they contain?—What! Make me her confessor?—Me?—No secret sin, of thought, word, or deed, concealed!—All remembered, all recited, all avowed!—Sins committed with the hated Henley!—Sins against love, against Clifton!—Does she imagine I can look on a paper like this and, while my eye shoots along the daring the insulting line, not feel all the fires that now devour me?—Surely she is frantic!

These things, Fairfax, are above my comprehension! My amazement must be eternal, for I never shall be able to understand them.—What! Tell me, Clifton, of her amorous debates with such a fellow? Appoint him her head-

usher over me? Announce him my rival? Meet my eye unabashed and affirm him to be my superior? Inform me of the deep hold he has taken of her heart? Own she kissed him?

Once again it is incredible! Nay most and still more incredible; for, strange to say and yet more strange for her to do, even this received such a varnish from her lips, her eyes, her beauties, her irradiating zeal, that reason everlastingly renounce me if I scarcely knew, while she spoke, whether it were not the history of some sylph, some heavenly spirit she was reciting?

Yes, Fairfax! There was a moment, a short but dangerous moment, at which so charmed was I by her eloquence, so amazed by her daring sincerity, so
moved

moved by the white candour of a soul so seeming pure, that, possessed by I know not what booby devil of generosity, I was on the point of throwing myself at her feet, confessing the whole guilt of my intents, and proclaiming myself her true and irrevocable convert!

And this before the breath that uttered these injuries was cold!

The fiend!—All the beauteous witcheries that ever yet were said or sung do not equal her!—Circe, Calypso, Morgana, fairy or goddess, mortal or immortal, knew not to mix the magic cup with so much art!

Not that it was her arguments. What are they? It was her bright her beaming eyes, her pouting beauteous lips,

her palpitating ecstatic bosom, her—I know not what, except that even this was not all!—No!—There was something still more heavenly!—An emanating deity!—The celestial effulgence of a divine soul, that flowed with fervour almost convulsive!

Had you witnessed her elevated aspirations!—Such swelling passions so mastered, so controlled, till then I never beheld! Like the slow pause of the solemn death-bell, the big tear at stated periods dropped; but dropped unheeded. Though she could not exclude them, her stoic soul disdained to notice such intrusive guests!—Her whole frame shook with the warfare between the feelings and the will—And well might it shake!

I went

I went prepared, and lucky it was that I did. My fixed determination was to be silent, that I might profit by what I should hear. That one dangerous moment excepted, I was firm!—Firm!—Not to be moved; though rocks would, had they listened!

Yes, Fairfax, I did my part. Not that I am certain that to fall at her feet like a canting methodist, own myself the most reprobate of wretches, whine out repentance, and implore forgiveness at the all sufficient fountain of her mercy would not be the very way to impose upon her best.

I begin indeed to be angry at myself for not having yet resolved on one consistent plan. Schemes so numerous present themselves, and none without its

difficulties and objections, that to determine is no easy task. Circumstances in part must guide me. I must have patience. At present I can only prepare and keep in readiness such cumbersome engines as this phlegmatic foggy land of beef and pudding can afford. I must supply the fire, if I find it necessary to put the machines in motion.

But, having decreed her fall, my spirits are now alert, and there is not a being that surrounds me to whom imagination does not assign a possible part: and that the part should be well-suited to the person must be my care.

My first exercise must be on myself. Apathy or the affectation of apathy must be acquired—Inevitably must be—My passions must be masked: I must pretend

tend to have conquered them. In their naked and genuine form they are indecent, immoral, impure, I know not what ! But catch a metaphysical quirk, and let vanity and dogmatic assertion stand sponsors and baptize it *a truth*, and then raptures, extravagance, and bigotry itself are deities ! Be then as loud, as violent, as intolerant as the most rancorous of zealots, and it is all the sublime ardour of virtue.

Yes ! I must learn to ape their contempt of all and every terrene object, motive, and respect !

Inclose the strange paper I sent you and return it in your next. I sent it in her own hand-writing, that your eyes might have full conviction. I took a copy of it, but I have since recollected I

may want the original. The time may come when she may assail me with accusation and complaint: I will then present that paper, and flash guilt upon her!

I am much deceived if I do not observe in this gardening and improving knight a want of former cordiality, a decrease of ardour, and perhaps a wish to retract—Why let him!—To the daughter's deadly sins let him add new: it will but make invention more active, and revenge more keen! I will have an eye upon him: I half hope my suspicions are true!

The aunt Wenbourne too still continues to give laud unto Mr. Henley!—Damn Mr. Henley!—But she may be necessary; and, as she is entirely governed

verned by the gull Edward, I must submit to bring myself into his favour. The thing may easily be done.

The lordly uncle Fitz-Allen is secure. I frequently dine with him on what he calls his open day; he being overwhelmed with business, as blockheads usually are; and I do not fail to insinuate the relationship in which, if care be not taken, he may hereafter chance to stand to a gardener's son. His face flames at the supposition, and his red nose burns more bright! What will it do, should I make him my tool, when he finds to what good purpose he has been an abettor? Be that his concern; it neither is nor ever shall be mine.

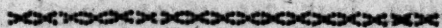
But none of these are the exact agent

I want; nor have I found him yet. They at best can only act as auxiliaries. Laura indeed may be eminently useful; but the plotting, daring, mischievous, malignant yet subaltern imp incarnate, that should run, fly, dive, be visible and invisible, and plunge through frost or fire to execute my behests, is yet to be discovered.

Were I in Italy, disburse but a few sequins and battling legions would move at my bidding: but here we have neither cicisbeos, carnivals, confessors, bravoes nor sanctuaries. No—We have too few priests and too much morality for our noble corps to flourish in full perfection.

I know not that all this may be necessary, but I suspect it will, and I must
prepare

prepare for the worst ; for I will accomplish my purpose in despite of hell or honesty !—Ay, Fairfax, will !—Gentle means, insinuation, and hypocrisy shall be my first resource ; and if these fail me, then I will order my engines to play !



I have been once more reading my copy of this unaccountable paper, and though every word is engraven in my memory, it dropped from my hand with new astonishment ! Her history of her Mr. Henley, the yearnings of her heart toward him, and her unabashed justification of all she has said, all she has thought and all she has done are not to be paralleled in the records of female extravagance.

She

She comes however to the point at last—Calculation is in favour of celibacy—For once, lady, you are in the right!—We may appear to agree on cases more dubious, but on that it will be miraculous if we ever hereafter differ.

I cannot but again applaud myself, for keeping my preconceived resolution of silence and reserve so firmly. I rejoice in my fortitude and my foresight; for her efforts were so strenuous, and her emotions so catching, that had I been less prepared all had been lost.

C. CLIFTON.

LET.

LETTER LXXXI.

COKE CLIFTON**TO****GUY FAIRFAX.**

London, Dover Street.

YES, yes, Fairfax! She takes the sure and resolute road to ruin, and travels it with unwearied ardour!—What think you she has done now?—An earthquake would have been more within my calculation!—She labours hard after the marvellous!—She has been angling again

again in the muddy pool of paradox, and has hooked up a new dogma!—And what is it?—Why nothing less than an affelevation that the promise she made me is not binding!—Promises are non-entities: they mean nothing, stand for nothing, and nothing can claim.

So be it—It is a maxim, divine apostate, that will at least serve my turn as effectually as yours. To own the truth, I never thought promises made to capricious ladies stood for much; nor were my scruples at present likely to have been increased. If she, a woman, be simple enough to have faith in the word of man, 'tis her fault. Let her look to it!

This is not all: the doctrine is not of her own invention! Mr. Henley, the
eternal

eternal Mr. Henley again appears upon the scene, from which he is scarcely ever a moment absent!—Were it possible I could relent, she is determined I shall not. But they are both down in my tablets, in large and indelible characters; on the black list; and there for a time at least they shall remain.

My plan, Fairfax, is formed; and I believe completely. When I was first acquainted with her, as you know, my meaning was honest and my heart sincere. I was a fool at least for a fortnight; for that was the shortest period before I began at all to waver. I was indeed deeply smitten! Nor is desire cooled: delay, opposition, and neglect have only changed its purpose. She soon indeed taught me to treat her in
some

some manner like the rest of her sex, and to begin to plot. 'Tis well for me that I have a fertile brain : and it had been well for her could she have been contented with the conquest she had made, and have treated me with generosity equal to my deserts. But a hypocrite she has made me, and a hypocrite she shall find me ; ay and a deep one.

She has herself given me my clue : she has laid open her whole heart. She has the fatuity to mimic the perfect heroine ! Tell her but it is a duty, and with the Bramin wives she would lie down, calmly and resolutely, on the burning pile !

Well then ! I will tell her of a duty of which she little dreams ! Yes, she shall grant every thing I wish as an act of duty !

duty! I will convince her it is one! I! The pretty immaculate lamb must submit in this point to become my pupil; and it shall go hard or I will prove as subtle a logician as herself.

What say you, Fairfax? Is not the project an excellent one? Is it not worthy of the sapient Doctor Clifton? Shall I lose reputation, think you, by carrying it into effect?

I am already become a new man. My whole system is changed. She begins to praise me most unmercifully; and, while my very heart is tickled with my success, the lengthened visage of inspired quaker when the spirit moved was never more demure! I am too pleased, too proud of my own talents, not to persist.

Already

Already I am a convert to one of *her truths*. Do laugh, Fairfax! I have acknowledged that you and your footman are equal! Is it not ridiculous? However I am convinced! Ay and convinced I will remain, till time shall be. She shall teach me a truth a day!—Yet, no—I must not learn too fast; it may be suspicious: though I would be as speedy as I conveniently can in my progress.

The zeal of disputation burns within her; and, as I tell you, I am already one of her very good boys, because the pursuit of my own project makes me now as willing to listen and hunt after deductions, such as I want, as she is to teach and to supply me with those deductions. She starts at no proposition, however extravagant, if it do but appear

pear to result from any one of her favourite systems, of which she has a good round number. Rather than relinquish the least of them, she would suppose the glorious sun a coal-pit; and his dazzling rays no better than volumes of black smoke, polished and grown bright on their travels by attrition. She professes it to be the purpose of her life to free herself from all prejudices. But here she has the modesty to add the saving clause—"If it be practicable."

Could she, Fairfax, have a more convenient hypothesis? Do you not perceive its fecundity? And, the task being so very difficult, will it not be benevolent in me to lend her my assistance? What think you? Is it not possible to prove that marriage is a mere prejudice?

She

She shall find me willing to learn many or perhaps all of her doctrines; and in return I desire to teach her no more than one of mine. Can any thing be more reasonable, more generous? Nay, I will go further! I will not teach it her; she shall have all the honour of teaching it to me! Can man do more?

The most knotty and perplexed part of my plan was to find a contrivance to make the gardener's son an actor in the plot. The thing is difficult, but not impossible. I have various stratagems and schemes, in the choice of which I must be guided by circumstances. That which pleases me most is to invite him to sit in state, the umpire of our disquisitions.

I think I can depend upon myself,
otherwise

otherwise there would be danger in the project. But if I act my part perfectly, if I have but the resolution to listen coolly to their quiddities, sometimes to oppose, sometimes to recede, and always to own myself conquered on the points which suit me best, I believe both the gentleman and the lady will be sufficiently simple to suppose that in all this there will be nothing apocryphal. They will imagine the gilt statue to be pure gold. I shall be numbered among their elect! I shall rise from the alembic a saint of their own subliming! Shall be assayed and stamped current at their mint!

Yet I must be cautious. I would put my hand in the fire ere undertake so apparently mad a scheme, with any other

7 couple

couple in Christendom. Considering how very warm—Curfes bite and tingle on my tongue at the recollection!—Considering I say how very warm I know their inclinations toward each other to be, nothing but the proofs I have had could prompt me to commence an enterprize so improbable. But the uncommonness of it is a main part of its merit; and I think I know the ground I have to travel so well that I do not much fear I should lose my road.

I am aware that the enemy I have most to guard against is myself. To pretend a belief in opinions I despise, to sit with saturnine gravity and nod approbation when my sides are convulsed with laughter, to ape admiration at what
reason

reason contemns and spurns, and to smooth my features into suavity while my heart is bursting with gall at the intercourse they continually hold, of becks and smiles and approving kind epithets, to do all this is almost too much for mortal man! But I have already made several essays on myself, and I find that the obstinate resolution which an insatiable thirst of ample retribution inspires is not to be shaken, and renders me equal even to this task.

I am well aware however what dangerous quicksands the passions are; and that a good pilot is never sparing of soundings. I will therefore not only keep a rigorous watch upon myself, but take such measures as shall enable me to exclude or retain the grub-inonger, as I

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shall think fit, during our conversations.

Thus you are likely soon to hear more of our metaphysics; nay, if you be but industrious, enough to enable you to set up for yourself, and become the apostle of Paris. I know no place where, if you have but a morsel of the marvellous to detail, you will find hearers better disposed to gape and swallow.

C. CLIFTON.

LET-

LETTER LXXXII.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES

TO

LOUISA CLIFTON.

London, Grosvenor-Street.

A FORTNIGHT has almost elapsed since I last wrote to my Louisa, till my heart begins to cry shame at the delay! Could I plead no other excuse than the trifling occupations of a trifling world I must sign my own condemnation; but

C 2

your

your brother has afforded me better employment. Our frequent conversations on many of the best and most dignified of moral enquiries, his acute remarks and objections, and the difficult problems he has occasionally given me to solve, have left me in no danger of being idle.

Oh, Louisa, how exquisite is the pleasure I feel, to see him thus determined, thus incessant in his pursuit! A change so fortunate and so sudden astonishes while it delights!—May it continue!—May it increase!—May?—Vain unworthy wish!—It must—The mind having once seized on the clue of truth can neither quit its hold nor become stationary; it is obliged to advance. And when its powers are equal to those of

Coke

Coke Clifton, ought we to wonder at its bold and rapid flights?

Still the conquests he daily makes over his own feelings cannot but surprise. His struggles are evident, but they are effectual. He even resolutely casts off the strong prejudices he had conceived against Frank Henley, invites him to aid us in our researches, and appeals to him to explain and decide.

“Let us if we wish to weed out error be sincere in our efforts, and have no remorse for our prejudices.”

This is his own language, Louisa! Oh that I could fully communicate the pleasure this change of character gives me to my friend. Yes, the restraint which too frequent contradiction lays him under will soon wear off, and how great will

then be the enthusiasm with which he will defend and promulgate truth !

Nor is it less delightful to observe the satisfaction which this reform sometimes gives to Frank Henley. At others indeed he owns he is disturbed by doubt : but he owns it with feelings of regret, and is eager to prove himself unjust.

Yet respecting me his thoughts never vary—Alas ! Louisa, I still “ am his by right.” His tongue is silent, but his looks and manner are sufficiently audible. I surely have been guilty of the error I so much dreaded ; my cause was strong, but my arguments were feeble ; I have prolonged the warfare of the passions which I attempted to eradicate ; or rather have left on his mind a deep sense of injustice committed by me—— ! The
thought

thought is intolerable!—Excruciating!

But oh with what equanimity, with what fortitude does he endure his imagined wrongs! Pure most pure must that passion be which at once possesses the strength of his and his forbearance! There are indeed but few Frank Henleys!

Surely, Louisa, I may do him justice?—Surely to esteem the virtuous cannot merit the imputation of guilt?—Who can praise him as he deserves? And can that which is right in others be wrong in me?—Yet such are the mistakes to which we are subject, I scarcely can speak or even think of him without suspecting myself of committing some culpable impropriety!

Pardon, Louisa, these wanderings of

the mind! They are marauders which uniform vigilance alone can repel. They are ever in arms, and I obliged to be ever alert. But it is petty warfare, and cannot shake the dominion of truth.

My feelings have led me from the topic I intended for the chief subject of this letter.

The course of our enquiries has several times forced us upon that great question, "the progress of mind toward perfection, and the different order of things which must inevitably be the result." Yesterday this theme again occurred. Frank was present; and his imagination, warm with the sublimity of his subject, drew a bold and splendid picture of the felicity of that state of society when personal property no longer shall exist,

exist, when the whole torrent of mind shall unite in enquiry after the beautiful and the true, when it shall no longer be diverted by those insignificant pursuits to which the absurd follies that originate in our false wants give birth, when individual selfishness shall be unknown, and when all shall labour for the good of all !

A state so distant from present manners and opinions, and apparently so impossible, naturally gave rise to objections ; and your brother put many shrewd and pertinent questions, which would have silenced a mind less informed and less comprehensive than that of our instructor.

At last a difficulty arose which to me wore a very serious form ; and as what was said left a strong impression on my memory, I will relate that part of the con-

versation. Observe, Louisa, that Clifton and Frank were the chief speakers. Your brother began.

I confess, sir, you have removed many apparently unconquerable difficulties: but I have a further objection which I think unanswerable.

What is it?

Neither man nor woman in such a state can have any thing peculiar: the whole must be for the use and benefit of the whole?

As generally as practice will admit: and how very general that may be, imperfect as its constitution was, Sparta remained during five hundred years a proof.

Then how will it be possible, when society shall be the general possessor, for any man to say—*This is my servant?*

He

He cannot: there will be no servants.

Well but—*This is my child?*

Neither can he do that: they will be the children of the state.

Indeed!—And what say you to—*This is my wife?*—Can appropriation more than for the minute the hour or the day exist? Or, among so disinterested a people, can a man say even of the woman he loves—*She is mine?*

[We paused—I own, Louisa, I found myself at a loss; but Frank soon gave a very satisfactory reply.]

You have started a question of infinite importance, which perhaps I am not fully prepared to answer. I doubt whether in that better state of human society, to which I look forward with such

ardent aspiration, the intercourse of the sexes will be altogether promiscuous and unrestrained; or whether they will admit of something that may be denominated marriage. The former may perhaps be the truth: but it is at least certain that in the sense in which we understand marriage and the affirmation—*This is my wife*—neither the institution nor the claim can in such a state, or indeed in justice exist. Of all the regulations which were ever suggested to the mistaken tyranny of selfishness, none perhaps to this day have surpassed the despotism of those which undertake to bind not only body to body but soul to soul, to all futurity, in despite of every possible change which our vices and our virtues might effect, or however nume-

Tous

rous the secret corporal or mental imperfections might prove which a more intimate acquaintance should bring to light!

Then you think that some stipulation or bargain between the sexes must take place, in the most virtuous ages?

In the most virtuous ages the word bargain, like the word promise, will be unintelligible—We cannot bargain to do what is wrong, nor can we, though there should be no bargain, forbear to do what is right, without being unjust.

Whence it results that marriage, as a civil institution, must ever be an evil?

Yes. It ought not to be a civil institution. It is the concern of the individuals who consent to this mutual association, and they ought not to be prevented.

ed from beginning, suspending, or terminating it as they please.

Clifton addressed himself to me—
What say you to this doctrine, madam ?
Does it not shock, does it not terrify
you ?

As far as I have considered it, no. It appears to be founded on incontrovertible principles; and I ought not to be shocked that some of my prejudices are opposed, or at being reminded that men have not yet attained the true means of correcting their own vices.

Surely the consequences are alarming ! The man who only studied the gratification of his desires would have a new wife each new day ; and the unprotected fair would be abandoned to all the licentiousness of libertinism !

Frank

Frank again replied—Then you think the security of women would increase with their imagined increase of danger; and that an unprincipled man, who even at present if he be known is avoided and despised, would then find a more ready welcome, because as you suppose he would have more opportunities to injure?

I must own that the men fit to be trusted with so much power are in my opinion very few indeed.

You are imagining a society as perverse and vitiated as the present: I am supposing one wholly the contrary. I know too well that there are men who, because unjust laws and customs worthy of barbarians have condemned helpless women to infamy, for the loss of
that

that which under better regulations, and in ages of more wisdom has been and will again be guilt to keep, I know, sir, I say that the present world is infested by men, who make it the business and the glory of their lives to bring this infamy upon the very beings for whom they feign the deepest affection!—If ever patience can forsake me it will be at the recollection of these demons in the human form, who come tricked out in all the smiles of love, the protestations of loyalty, and the arts of hell, unrelentingly and causelessly to prey upon confiding innocence! Nothing but the malverse selfishness of man could give being or countenance to such a monster! Whatever is good, exquisite, or precious, we are individually taught to grasp at, and
if

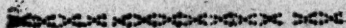
if possible to secure; but we have each a latent sense that this principle has rendered us a society of detestable misers, and therefore to rob each other seems almost like the sports of justice.

For which reason, sir, were I a father, I think I should shudder to hear you instructing my daughters in your doctrines.

I perceive you wholly misconceive me; and I very seriously request, pray observe, sir, I very seriously request you to remember that I would not teach any man's daughters so mad a doctrine as to indulge in sensual appetites, or foster a licentious imagination. I am not the apostle of depravity. While men shall be mad, foolish, and dishonest enough to be vain of bad principles, women may
be

be allowed to seek such protection as bad laws can afford—It is an eternal truth that the wisdom of man is superior to the strength of lions; but I would not therefore turn an infant into a lion's den.

I am glad to be undeceived. I thought it was scarcely possible you should mean what your words seemed to imply—At present I understand you; and I again confess my surprise to find so much consistency, and so many powerful arguments on a question in favour of which I thought nothing rational could be advanced. You have afforded me food for reflection, and I thank you. I shall not easily forget what has been said.



Tell

Tell me, my dear Louisa, are you not delighted with this dialogue; and with the candour, the force of thinking, and what is still better the virtuous fears of your brother? His mind revolted at the mischief which it seemed to forebode: he was happy at being undeceived. And, with respect to argument, I doubt whether he forgot any one of the most apparently formidable objections to what is called the levelling system. But he was pleased to learn that this is only giving a good cause a bad name. Such a system is infinitely more opposite to levelling than the present; since the very essence of it is that merit shall be the only claimant, and shall be certain of pre-eminence.

The satisfaction I feel, my friend, is
beyond

44 ANNA ST. IVES:

beyond expression. To have my hopes revived and daily strengthened, after fearing they must all be relinquished, increases the pleasure. It is great and would be unmixed but for——Well, well!—Let Clifton but proceed and Frank will no longer say——“To the end of time”——! You know the rest, Louisa——All good be with you!

A. W. ST. IVES.

P. S. I thought I had forgotten something. When Frank had retired, your brother with delightful candour praised the great perspicuity as well as strength with which he argued. He added there was one circumstance in particular in his principles concerning marriage, although they had at first appeared

appeared very alarming, which was highly satisfactory : and this was the confidence they inspired. “ Nothing, he said, gave “ his nature so much offence as the suspicions with which, at present, our sex view the men. About two years ago he had a partiality for a Neapolitan lady, and thought himself in love with her : but in this he was mistaken ; it was rather inclination than passion. He knew not at that time what it was to love. Neither this Neapolitan lady, though beautiful and highly accomplished, nor any other woman his feelings told him could inspire pure affection, who was incapable of confiding in herself ; and, wanting this self-confidence, of confiding in her lover. Suspicion originates

“ginates in a consciousness of self defect.
“Those who cannot trust themselves
“cannot be induced to trust others.”

Thus justly, Louisa, did he continue to reason. Nor could I forbear to apply the doctrine to myself: I have been too distrustful of him; my conscience accused me, and I am resolved to remedy the fault. I have always held suspicion to be the vice of mean and feeble minds: but it is less difficult to find rules by theory than to demonstrate them by practice.

I am sorry, my dear Louisa, to hear that the infirmities of Mrs. Clifton increase. But these are evils for which we can at present find no remedy; and to which we must therefore submit with patience and resignation.

LET.

LETTER LXXXIII.

COKE CLIFTON**TO****GUY FAIRFAX.**

London, Dover Street

I WILL not suppose, Fairfax, you seek to compliment me, when you say you enjoy the exuberant heat of soul, the fire that pervades my epistles. I am glad you do. I shall not think the worse of your talents. Many a line have I written in all the burst of feeling, and

not

not a few in all the blaze of wit, and have said to myself,—Should he not understand me now?—Why if he should not, dulness everlasting be his portion!—But you take the sure way to keep up my ardour. While I perceive you continue to enjoy I shall continue to be communicative. A sympathetic yawner I may be, but I do not believe I am often the first to begin.

I knew not half my own merits. I act my part to admiration. 'Tis true the combining circumstances are all favourable. I must be a dunce indeed if in such a school I should want chicanery. Our disputations have been continual; nor have I ever failed to turn them on the most convenient topics. But none of them have equalled the

the last; managed as it was with dexterity by me, and in the very spirit I wished by my opponents. I speak in the plural; for I took care to have them both present. Several remarks which I had heard from him assured me he would second my plan; which was no less than to prove—marriage a farce!—Would you have believed, Fairfax, I should have had the temerity to step upon a rock so slippery; and to have requested this Archimago of Adam's journeymen [Adam you know being the world's head-gardener] to stay and lend me his support?—Yet thus audacious was I; and courage as it ought has been crowned with success!

The thought was suggested by themselves; and, had you or I or any of us

vile marriage haters been declaiming against the saffron god, and his eternal shackles, I doubt whether the best of us could have said any thing half so much to the purpose!—Is it not excellent?—

Then had you heard me preach, ay, me myself, against libertines and libertinism!

By the by, Don Cabbage-plant had the insolence to say two or three devilish severe things, dishonourable to the noble fraternity of us knights of the bed-chamber, which if I forget may woman never more have cause to remember me!

However I brought him to own,—I—[Do laugh!] by my very great apprehensions of the effects of such a doctrine, that though marriage be a bad thing

thing it is quite necessary, at present, for the defence of the weaker vessels and modest maidenhood. Ay and I applauded him for his honest candour ! I was glad I had misunderstood him ! Thanked him for all his profound information ! In short made him exactly what I wished, my tool ! And a high-tempered tool he is, by the aid of which I will shew myself a most notable workman !——

Not but the fellow's eye was upon me. I could observe him prying, endeavouring to search and probe me. But I came too well prepared. Instead of shrinking from the encounter, my brow contracted increasing indignation ; and my voice grew louder, as I stood forth the champion of chaste virginity and

sanctimonious wedlock!—The scene, in the very critical sense of the phrase, was high comedy!—

It was well, Fairfax, they went no farther than Paris: had either of them only reached Turin I had been half undone! And had they touched at Naples, Rome, Venice, or half a dozen other fair and flourishing cities, my character for a pretty behaved, demure, and virtuous gentleman had been irremediably ruined!

Upon my soul I cannot put it out of my head!—Had you heard me remonstrate what a horrid thing it would be to have marriage destroyed, and us honest fellows turned loose among the virgins, from whom we should catch and ravish each a new damsel every new day, and
had

had you seen what a fine serious undertaker's face I put upon the business, your heart would have chuckled ! To the day of your death it would never have been forgotten !

Perhaps you will wonder how I could draw such a doctrine from these spinners of hypothesis. I will tell you. I had heard them severally maintain—Try to guess what!—Not in seven years, though you were to do nothing else.—You I suppose like me have heard that liberty, security, and property are the three main pillars of political happiness ?——Well then, these professors maintain that individual property is a general evil !——What is more, they maintain it by such arguments as would puzzle college, council, or senate to refute. But that I

am determined never to torment my brain about such quips and quillets, may I turn Turk if they would not have made a convert of me, and have persuaded me that an estate of ten thousand a year was a very intolerable thing!

My intention was to keep my countenance, but to laugh at them in my heart most incontinently. However, I soon found my side of the question was not so perfectly beyond all doubt, nor theirs quite so ridiculous as I had imagined.

'Tis true, I went predetermined to be convinced, and to take all they should tell me for gospel. I had a conclusion of my own to draw, and if I could but lead to that, I cared not how much I granted.

I know

I know not whether this predilection in me was of any advantage to their argument, though I think it was not; for, so ready was the solution to every difficulty, I boldly ventured to state objections which I meant to have kept out of sight, lest I should myself overturn a system that suited my purpose. I perceived their eagerness, saw there was no danger that they should stop at trifles even if I should happen to throw them a bone to pick, and the readiness of each reply raised my curiosity. I fearlessly drew out my heavy artillery, which they with ease and safety as fearlessly dismounted. With a breath my strong holds were all puffed down, like so many houses of cards.

By this however my main business

was done more effectually. We came to it by fair deduction. It was not abruptly introduced; it was major, minor, and consequent—All individual property is an evil—Marriage makes woman individual property—Therefore marriage is an evil—Could there be better logic?

As for his saving clause, that marriage in these times of prejudice and vice [I have the whole cant by rote, Fairfax.] is a necessary evil, leave me to do that away. What! Is she not a heroine? And can I not convince her that to act according to a bad system, when there is a better, were to descend to the ways of the vulgar? Can I not teach her how superior she is to the pretty misses who conform to such mistaken laws? Shall she want the courage and the generosity
to

to set the first good example? How often have I seen her eyes sparkle, her bosom heave, and her zeal break forth in virtuous resolutions to encounter any peril to obtain a worthy purpose! And can there be a more worthy?

Curse upon these qualms of conscience! Never before did I feel any thing so teasing, so tormenting! And, knowing what I know, remembering what I never can forget, the slights, injuries, and insults I have received, how I came to feel them now is to me wholly inconceivable. She is acting it is true with what she calls the best and purest of intentions toward me; she believes them to be such; she sometimes almost obliges me to believe them such myself. She tortures me, by half constraining me to

revere the virtues in favour of which she harangues so divinely. But shall I like a poor uxorious lackadaisy driveller sit down satisfied with a divided heart?—I!—Has she not with her own lips, under her own hand, avowed and signed her contumelious guilt, her audacious preference of a rival?—A mean, a base, a vulgar rival!—And after this shall my projects suffer impediment from cheese-curd compassion?—Shall the querulous voice of conscience arrest my avenging arm?—No, Fairfax!—It cannot be! Though my heart in its anger could not accuse her of a single crime beside, that alone, that damning preference would be all-sufficient!—The furies have no stings that equal this recollection!

I have

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I have been throwing up my sashes, striding across my room, and construing ten lines of Seneca, and my pulse again begins to beat more temperately.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Let us argue the point with this pert, unruly, marplot conscience of mine.

It was not at first without considerable reluctance and even pain that I began to plot. I almost abhorred reducing her to the level of the sex, not one of whom was ever yet her equal. But she used me ill, Fairfax. Yes, she used me ill; and you well know that want of resentment is want of courage. None but pitiful, contemptible, no-fouled fellows

forget insults, till ample vengeance have been taken. And shall conscience insolently pretend to contradict the decree?

Beside I could not but remember our old maxims, the Cyprian battles our jovial corps had fought, and the myrtle wreaths each wight had won. Should I, the leader the captain of the band, be the first to fly my colours? Was it not our favourite axiom that he who could declare, upon his honour, he had found a generous woman, who never had attempted once to deceive, trifle with, or play him trick, should still be acknowledged a companion of our order, even though he were to marry: but that all coquetry, all tergiversation, all wrongs, however slight, were unpardonable,

donable, and only one way to be redressed? What answer can conscience give to that?

Your letters too are another stimulative. You detail the full, true and particular account of your amorous malefactions, and vaunt of petty obstacles, petty arts, and petty triumphs over Signoras and Madames who advance, challenge you to the field, and give battle purposely to be overcome. Their whole resistance is but to make you feel how great an Alexander you are, and that having vanquished them you are invincible! As you will certainly never meet with an Anna St. Ives, 'tis possible you may die in that opinion. But, I tell you, Fairfax, if you compare these practised Amazons to my heroine, you are
in

in a most heterodox and damnable error, of which if you do not timely repent your soul will never find admission into the lover's Elysium.

Bear witness, however, to my honesty; of women I allow her to be the most excellent, but still a woman, and not as I foolishly for a while supposed an absolute goddess. No, no. Madam can curvet and play her pranks, though of totally a different kind; and, being almost mortal at present, mere mortal must become in despite of conscience and its green sickness physiognomy.

At first I knew her not; and, unwilling to encounter logic in a gauze cap, I ceased to oppose her arguments, and thought to conciliate her by resolving to be of her creed. What could be more generous?

generous? But no, forsooth! The veil was too thin! To pretend conviction when it was not felt, and to be satisfied with arguments before I had heard them, were all insufficient for her! The prize could be gained only by him who could answer the enigmas of the Sphinx! I must enter the lists of cavil, and run a tilt at wrangling, ere the lady would bestow the meed of conquest! Can conscience pretend to palliate conduct like this?

I then turned my thoughts to a new project, and endeavoured to overpower her by passion, by excess of ardour, by tenderness and importunity. They had a temporary effect, but I found them equally inefficacious. Nor was the art by which I had oftenest been successful forgotten;

forgotten ; though I confess that with her, from the beginning, it afforded me but little hope. I tried to familiarize her to freedoms. I began with her hands ; but she soon taught me that even her hands were sacred ; they were not to be treated with familiarity, nor to be kissed and pressed like other hands ! Let conscience if it can tell me why.

In fine, while to this insolent pedagogue she has been all honeyfuckle, sweet marjoram and heart's ease, to me she has been rue, wormwood and hellebore : him praising, me reproofing : confiding in him, suspecting me : and, as the very summit and crown of injury, proclaiming him the possessor the master of her admiration, or in plain English of her heart.

And now, if after this impartial, this cool, this stoic examination Mr. Conscience should ever again be impertinent enough to open his lips, I am determined without the least ceremony to kick him out of doors.

When this famous conference of which I told you some half an hour ago was ended, and our president, our monarch of morals and mulberries had quitted his chair and withdrawn, I played an aftergame of no small moment. After pronouncing a panegyric on the gentleman, as a legislator fit for truth and me, I read the lady a modest lecture on confidence, informed her of almost the exact quantity which I expected she would repose in me, and declaimed with eloquence and effect against those suspicious beauties

beauties who always regard us honest fellows as so many naughty goblins; who, like the Ethiopian monster, voraciously devour every Virgin-Andromeda they meet. But as I tell you, I did it modestly. I kept on my guard, watched the moment to press forward or to retreat; and wielded my weapons with dexterity and success.

Poor girl! Is it not a pity that the very shield in which she confides, her perfect honesty and sincerity, should be destined to fall upon and overwhelm her?—Thus says counsellor Sentiment: and counsellor Sentiment is a great orator!—But what say I? Why I say to have the Fates decreed, and therefore let the Fates look to it; 'tis no concern of mine; I am but their willing instrument.

These

These however are but the preliminaries, the preparations for the combat. Ere long I shall be armed at all points, and what is better by her own fair hands. Nor do I know how soon I may begin the attack. I have been casting about to send this superintendant of the cardinal virtues, this captain of casuists and caterpillars out of the way; and I think I have hit upon a tolerably bold and ingenious stratagem. I say bold because I perceive it is not without danger; but I doubt I cannot devise a better. Without naming or appearing to mean myself, I have suggested to him, by inventing a tale of two friends of mine, what a noble and disinterested thing it would be for him to go down into the country and prevail on his father
to

to remove all obstacles to our marriage——

How! Say you. Is marriage your plan? And if not is not that the way to ruin all?

There is the danger I talked of; but I do not think it great. The scoundrel gardener, I mean the father; who is heartily despised by every body, is desirous that his son should marry Anna. I know not whether I ever before mentioned this sublime effort of impudence. The cunning rascal has so long been the keeper of Sir Arthur's purse, that it is supposed two thirds of the contents have glided into his own pocket. This is the reason of the delay on Sir Arthur's part, which at present I do not wish to shorten. That this son of a grub catcher, a Demosthenes

most thenest though he be, should prevail on such a father, if he were to go down as I hope he will, is but little probable. However, should the least prognostic of such a miracle appear, I have my remedy prepared. I will generously have a letter written to the senior overseer of the gravel walks, which if the character I have heard of him be not wholly false, shall revive all his hopes, and put an end to compliance.

In Italy, where amorous plotting is the national profession, I was not easily circumvented; and here, where another gunpowder treason would as soon be suspected as such gins and snares, at least by these very honest and sublime sim-pletons, I laugh at the supposition of being unearthed.

One

One word more. I think I observe in this knight of Gotham, this Sir Arthur, a more cordial kind of yearning toward our young prince of Babel land than formerly; a sort of desire to be more intimate with him, of which by the by the youth is not very prompt to admit, and an effort to treat him with more respect himself, by way as it were of setting a good example to others. If my conjectures are right, the threats of the old muckworm father have shaken the crazy nerves of the baronet; and I half suspect there is something more of meaning at the bottom of this. Were it so, were he to attempt to discard me, it would indeed add another spur to the fury of revenge! An affront so deep given by

7 this

this poor being, this essence of insignificance, would make revenge itself, hot unfatiable revenge grow more hot, madden more, and thirst even after blood! —Patience foams at the supposition!

Thank heaven I hear the noisy postman with his warning bell, which obliges me in good time to conclude and cool these fermenting juices of mine!

C. CLIFTON.

LET-

LETTER LXXXIV.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

OLIVER TRENCHARD.

London, Grosvenor Street,

MY mind, Oliver, is harassed by a variety of doubts. I believe I shall soon be down at Wenbourne Hill, and of course shall then not fail to meet thee and visit thy most worthy father.

The reason of my journey originates in the doubts I mentioned. I am angry
with

with myself for feeling alarms at one moment which appear impossibilities the next. If my fears have any foundation, this Clifton is the deepest, the most hardened fiend-like hypocrite imagination can paint!—But it cannot be!—Surely it cannot!—I am guilty, heinously guilty for enduring such a thought!—So much folly and vice, combined with understanding and I may say genius so uncommon, is a supposition too extravagant, too injurious!

And yet it is strange, Oliver!—A conduct so suddenly altered, so totally opposite to old and inveterate habits, is scarcely reconcileable to the human character. But if dissimulation can be productive of this, is truth less powerful? No!—Truth is omnipotent. Yet who

ever saw it hasty in its progress? My only hope in this case is that the superiority of his mind has rendered him an exception to general rules.

But what could he propose by his hypocrisy?—I cannot tell—His passions are violent and ungovernable; and are or very lately have been in full vigour—Again and again 'tis strange!

But what of this?—Why these fears? Can she be spotted, tinged by the stain of un sanctified desire?—Never!—The pure chastity of her soul is superior to attaint!—Yet—Who can say?—Willfully her mind can never err: but who can affirm that even she may not be deceived, and may not act erroneously from the most holy motives?

Perhaps, Oliver, it is my own situation,

tion, my own desires, but half subdued, in which these doubts take birth. If so they are highly culpable.

Be it as it may, there is a duty visibly chalked out for me by circumstances. Her present situation is surely a state of danger. To see them married would now give me delight. It would indeed be the delight of despair, of gloom almost approaching horror. But of that I must not think. My father is the cause of the present delay. I fear I cannot remove this impediment, but it becomes me to try.

Though I had before conceived the design, this conduct has even been suggested to me by Clifton; and in a mode that proves he can be artful if he please.

Yet does it not likewise prove him to be in earnest?

We have lately had several conversations, one in particular which, even while it seemed to place him in an amiable, sincere, and generous light, excited some of the very doubts and terrors of which I speak—If he be a hypocrite, he guards himself with a tenfold mask!—It cannot—No—It cannot be!—

I mean to speak to Sir Arthur concerning my journey, but not to inform him of its purport: it would have the face of insult to tell him I was going to be his advocate with his servant. Not to mention that he has lately treated me with increasing and indeed unusual kindness. If I do make an effort, however,

ever, it shall be a strenuous one; though my hopes that it should be effectual are very few. My decision is not yet final, but in my next thou wilt probably learn the result. Farewell.

F. HENLEY.

P. S. My brain is so busied by its fears that I forgot to caution thee against a mistake into which it is probable this letter may lead. I mentioned, in one of my last, the project I had conceived of leaving England. Do not imagine I have abandoned a design on which the more I reflect the more I am intent. The great end of life is to benefit community. My mind in its present situation is too deeply affected freely and without incumbrance to exert itself—

This is weakness!—But not the less true, Oliver. We are at present so imbued in prejudice, have drunken so deeply of the cup of error, that, after having received taints so numerous and ingrained, to wish for perfect consistency in virtue I doubt were vain. Here or at the antipodes alike I should remember her: but I should not alike be so often tempted and deluded by false hopes: the current of thought would not so often meet with impediments, to arrest, divide, and turn it aside.

I have studied to divine in what land or among what people, whether savage or such as we call polished, the energies of mind might be most productive of good. But this is a discovery which I have yet to make. The reasons are so numerous

on

on each side that I have formed a plan for a kind of double effort. I think of sailing for America, where I may aid the struggles of liberty, may freely publish all which the efforts of reason can teach me, and at the same time may form a society of savages, who seem in consequence of their very ignorance to have a less quantity of error, and therefore to be less liable to repel truth than those whose information is more multifarious. A merchant, with whom by accident I became acquainted, and who is a man of no mean understanding, approves and has engaged to promote my plan. But of this if I come to Wenbourne Hill we will talk further. Once more, Oliver, adieu.

 LETTER LXXXV.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover-street:

COME to my aid, Fairfax; encourage me; feed my vanity; let hungry ambition banquet and allow me to be a hero, lest I relent: for, were I not or Lucifer or Coke Clifton, 'tis certain I should not persevere. By the host of heaven, Fairfax, but she is a divine creature!

creature! She steals upon the soul! A heart of rock could not resist her! Nor are they wiles, nor woman's lures, nor blandishments of tricksey dimples, nor captivating smiles, with which she forms her adamantine fetters. No; 'tis the open soul of honesty; true, sincere, and unrelentingly just, to me, to herself, to all; 'tis that enchanting kindness, that heavenly suavity which never forsakes her; that equanimity of smiling yet obstinate fortitude; that hilarity of heart that knows not gloom because it knows not evil; that inscrutable purity which rests secure that all like itself are natively immaculate; that—Pshaw!—I can find no words, find you imagination therefore, and think not I will labour at impossibility. You have

read of ancient vestals, of the virgins of Paradise, and of demi-deities that tune their golden harps on high?—Read again—And, having travelled with prophets and apostles to the heaven of heavens, descend and view her, and invent me language to describe her, if you can!

Curse on this Frank Henley! But for him my vengeance never would have been roused! Never would the fatal sentence have passed my lips!—'Tis now irrevocable—Sure as the lofty walls of Troy were doomed by gods and destiny to smoke in ruins, so surely must the high-fouled Anna fall—"Ill starred wench!"—I, Fairfax, like other conquerors, cannot shut pity from my bosom. While I cry havoc I could almost

most weep; could look reluctant down on devastation which myself had made, and heave a sigh, and curse my proper prowess!—In love and war alike, such, Fairfax, is towering ambition. It must have victims: its reckless altars ask a full and large supply; and when perchance a snowy lamb, spotless and pure, bedecked for sacrifice, in all the artless pomp of unsuspecting innocence is brought, bright burns the flame, the white clouds curl and mantle up to heaven, and there ambition proudly sits, and snuffs with glut of lusty delight the grateful odour.

I know your tricks, Fairfax; you are one of the doubtful doctors; you love to catch credulity upon your hook. I hear fat laughter gurgling in your throat, and

out bolts your threadbare simile—"Before the battle's won the Brentford hero sings Te Deum."—But don't be wasteful of the little wit you have.—Do I not tell you it is decreed? When was I posted for a vapouring Hector? What but the recollections of my reiterated ravings, resolves, threats, and imprecations could keep me steady; assailed as I am by gentleness, benevolence, and saint-like charity?

By the agency of subtlety, hypoerisy, and fraud, I seek to rob her of what the world holds most precious. By candour, philanthropy, and a noble expansion of heart, she seeks to render me all that is superlatively great and good—Why did she not seek all this in a less offensive way? Why did she oblige me

to become a disputant with a plebeian?—Disputant!—What do I say?—Worse, worse!—Rival!—Devil!—Myriads of virtues could not atone the crime!—Yet in this deep guilt she perseveres and glories!—Can I forget?—Fear me not, nor rank my defeat among things possible—Be patient and lend an ear.

To one sole object all my efforts point: her mind must be prepared, ay so that when the question shall be put, chaste as that mind is, it scarcely shall receive a shock. Such is the continual tendency of my discourse. Her own open and undisguised manners are my guide. Not a principle she maintains but which, by my cunning questions and affected doubts pushed to an extreme,
adds

adds links to the chain in which I mean to lead her captive.

Perhaps, Fairfax, you will tell me this is the old artifice; and that the minds of all women, who can be said to have any mind, must thus be inveigled to think lightly of the thing they are about to lose. Granted. And yet the difference is infinite. They are brought to think thus lightly of chastity: but, should you or any one of the gallant phalanx attempt to make Anna St. Ives so think, she would presently cry buzz to the dull blockhead, and give him his eternal dismissal.

Virtue with her is a real existence, and as such must be adored. Her passions are her slaves; and in this and this

this alone the lovely tyrant is the advocate of despotism. She soon taught me that common arts would be treated by her, not merely with determined and irrevocable repulse, but with direct contempt. Some very feeble essays presently satisfied me. No encroachments of the touch, no glazing of the eye, no well feigned tremblings and lover's palpitations would for an instant be suffered by her. Take the following as a specimen of my mode of attack.

Among her variety of hypotheses she has one on mutability. "Little, she says, " as we know of matter and spirit, we " still know enough to perceive they " are both instantaneously, eternally, and " infinitely changing. Of what the " world has been, through this series of " never

“ never beginning never ending muta-
“ tion, she can form nothing more than
“ conjecture: yet she cannot but think
“ that the golden age is a supposition
“ treated at present with ridicule it does
“ not deserve. By the laws of necessity,
“ mind, unless counteracted by acci-
“ dents beyond its control, is conti-
“ nually progressive in improvement.
“ With some such accidents we are
“ tolerably well acquainted. Such are
“ those which have been destructive of
“ its progress, notwithstanding the high
“ attainments it had made in Greece
“ and Rome. The ruins still existing
“ in Egypt are wonderful proofs of
“ what it once was there; though Egypt
“ is at present almost unequalled in ig-
“ norance and depravity. Who then
“ shall

“ shall affirm changes still more extraor-
“ dinary have not happened? She has
“ no doubt, some revolution in the pla-
“ netary system excepted, that men will
“ attain a much higher degree of inno-
“ cence, length of life, happiness, and
“ wisdom than have ever yet been
“ dreamed of, either by historian, fabu-
“ list, or poet : for causes which for-
“ merly were equal to the effects then
“ produced are now rendered impotent
“ by the glorious art of printing ; which
“ spreads, preserves, and multiplies
“ knowledge, in despite of ignorance,
“ false zeal, and despotism.”

Such was her discourse, and thus vast
were her views ! Nay, urged on by my
questions, by the consequences which re-
sulted from her own doctrines, and by
the

the ardour of emanating benevolence, she astonished me by her sublime visions; for she proceeded to prove, from seemingly fair deduction, "that men should
" finally render themselves immortal;
" should become scarcely liable to moral
" mistake; should all act from principles previously demonstrated, and
" therefore never contend; should be
" one great family without a ruler, because in no need of being ruled;
" should be incapable of bodily pain or
" passion; and should expend their
" whole powers in tracing moral and
" physical cause and effect; which, being infinite in their series, will afford
" them infinite employment of the most
" rational and delightful kind!"

Oh! How did the sweet enthusiast glow,

glow, ay and make me glow too, while, with a daring but consistent hand she sketched out this bold picture of illusion!

But, while the lovely zealot thus descanted on splendid and half incomprehensible themes, what did I? Why, when I found her at the proper pitch, when I saw benevolence and love of human kind beaming with most ardour in her eye, and pouring raptures from her lip, I then recalled her to her beloved golden age, her times of primitive simplicity; made her inform me what lovers then were, and what marriage; and what the bonds were which hearts so affectionate and minds so honest and pure demanded of each other.

What think you could her answers to
all

all these questions be? What but such as I wished? Could lovers like these suspect each other? Could they basely do the wrong to ask for bond or pledge? Or, if they wanted the virtue to charm, could they still more basely ask rewards they did not merit? Could they, with the wretched selfish jealousy of a modern marriage-maker, seek to cadaverate affection and to pervert each other into a utensil, a commodity, a thing appropriate to self and liable with other lumber to be cast aside? No, Fairfax; she played fairly and deeply into my hand. She created exactly such a pair of lovers as I could have desired: for with respect to the truth and constancy with which she endowed them, if I cannot be the thing, I can wear the garb;

Hs

ay

ay and it shall become me too, shall sit *dégagé* upon me, and be thought my native dress.

Think not that I am a mere listener : far the reverse. I throw in masterly touches, which, while they seem only to heighten her picture, produce the full effect by me intended. Thus, when she described the faith and truth and love of the innocents of her own creation, how did I declaim against the abuse to which such doctrine, though immutably true, was liable !

“ Alas ! madam,” said I, “ had the
“ unprincipled youths with which these
“ times abound your powers of argu-
“ ment with their own principles, how
“ dreadful would be the effect !— How
“ many

"many unsuspecting hearts would they
"betray!"

I am once more just returned from the palace of Alcina! I broke off at the end of my last paragraph to attend my charmer; and here again am I detesting myself for want of resolution; and detesting myself still more for having made a resolution, for having undertaken that which I am so eternally tempted to renounce. Your sneer and your laugh are both ready—I know you, Fairfax—"The gentleman is founding a retreat! The enterprise is too difficult!"—No—I tell you no, no, no,—

But

But I am almost afraid it is too damnable!

I pretended to be exceedingly anxious concerning the delay, and afflicted at not hearing any thing more from Sir Arthur. If I did not do this, it might be a clue to lead her to suspect hypocrisy, considering how very ardent I was at the commencement. And, to say the truth, I am weary enough of waiting; though it is not my wish to be relieved by any expedition of Sir Arthur's, who, as I hinted to you before, does not appear to be in the least hurry, and whose uncton for the gardener's son increases.

But had you heard her console me!
Had you seen her kindness! The tear
glistening in her eye while she entreated
me

me to consider delay as a fortunate event, which tended to permanent and ineffable happiness; had you I say beheld her foul, for it was both visible and audible, Fairfax though you are, the marauder of marriage land and the sworn foe of virginity, even you would have pardoned my tergiversation.

Did you never behold the sun burst forth from behind the riding clouds? The scene that was gloomy, dark and dismal is suddenly illumined; what was obscure becomes conspicuous; the bleak hills smile, the black meadows assume a bright verdure; quaking shadows dare no longer stay, cold damps are dispelled, and in an instant all is visible, clear, and radiant! So vanish doubts when she begins to speak! Thus in her presence

fence do the feelings glow ; and thus is gloom banished from the soul, till all is genial warmth and harmony !

These being my feelings now, when I am escaped, when I am beyond the circle of her sorceries, think, Fairfax, be just and think how seductive, how dangerous an enemy I have to encounter—Listen and judge.

“ Oh ! Clifton ”—She speaks ! Listen I say to her spells !—“ Oh ! Clifton, “ daily and hourly do I bless this happy “ accident, this delay ! I think, with “ the heroic archbishop, I could have “ held my right hand firmly till the “ flames had consumed it, could I but “ have brought to pass what this blessed “ event has already almost accom- “ plished ! To behold your mind what

“ it is and to recollect what it so lately
“ was is bliss unutterable! I consider
“ myself now as destined to be yours :
“ but whether I am or am not is perhaps
“ a thing of little moment. Let self be
“ forgotten, and all its petty interests !
“ What am I ? What can I be, com-
“ pared to what you may become ? The
“ patriot, the legislator, the statesman,
“ the reconciler of nations, the dispenser
“ of truth, and the instructor of the hu-
“ man race ; for to all these you are
“ equal. As for me, however ardent,
“ however great my good-will, I cannot
“ have the same opportunities. Beside
“ I must be just to myself and you, and
“ it delights me to declare I believe you
“ have a mind capable of conceptions
“ more vast than mine, of plans more
“ daring

“daring and systems more deep, and
 “of soaring beyond me. You have the
 “strong memory, the keen sensibility and
 “the rapid imagination which form the
 “poet. It is my glory to repeat that
 “your various powers, when called
 “forth, have as variously astonished me.
 “To bid you persevere were now to
 “wrong you, for I think I dare affirm
 “you cannot retreat. You have at pre-
 “sent seen too much, thought too much,
 “known too much ever to forget. In
 “private you will be the honour of your
 “family and the delight of your wife;
 “and in public the boast of your coun-
 “try and the admiration of the virtuous
 “and the wise.”

I fell on my knee to the speaking
 deity! She seemed delivering oracles!

My passions rose, my heart was full, her eulogium made it loath and abhor its own deceit; the words—"Madam, I am a villain!"—bolted to my lips, there they quivering lingered in excruciating suspense, and at last flunk back like cowards, half wishing but wholly ashamed to do their office.

By the immortal powers, Fairfax, it was past resisting! Why should I not be all she has described? The hero, the legislator, the great leader of this little world? Ay, why not? She seemed to prophecy. She has raised a flame in me which, if encouraged, might fertilize or desolate kingdoms. Body of Cæsar, I know not what to say!

'Tis true she has treated me ill; nay vilely. It cannot be denied. But ill treatment

treatment itself, from her, is superior to all the maukish kindness which folly and caprice endeavour to lavish. Fairfax, would you did but behold her ! My heart was never so assailed before !

My resolution is shaken, I own, but it is not obliterated. No ; I will think again. My very soul is repugnant to the supposition of leaving its envenomed tumours unassuaged, and its angered stabs unavenged. Yet, if healed they could be, she surely possesses that healing art—Once more I will think again.

What you tell me in the Postscript to your last concerning Count Caduke [Consult your dictionary ; or to save yourself trouble read Count Crazy, alias Beaunoir.] is wholly unintelligible to

me. But as you say the name of the gardener's son was several times mentioned by him, I shall take an immediate opportunity of interrogating the 'squire of shrubs, who I am certain from principle will when asked tell me all he knows.

Apropos of poetry. The panegyric of this sylph of the sun-beams gave me an impulse which I could not resist, and the following was the offspring of my headlong and impetuous muse; for such the huffey is whenever the fit is upon her. I commit it as it may happen to your censure or applause; with this stipulation, if you do not like it either alter it till you do, or write me another which both you and I shall like better. If that

be

be not fair and rational barter, I know nothing either of trade, logic, or common sense.

ANACREONTIC.

I.

WHEN by the gently gliding stream,
On banks where purple violets spring,
I see my Delia's beauties beam,
I hear my lovely Delia sing,
When hearts combine
And arms entwine,
When fond caresses, am'rous kisses
Yield the height of human blisses,
Entranc'd I gaze, and sighing say,
Thus let me love my life away.

II.

Or when the jocund bowl we pass,
And joke and wit and whim abound,
When song and catch and friend and lass
In sparkling wine we toast around,

When Bull and Pun
 Rude riot run,
 And finding still the mirth increasing,
 Pealing laughter roars fans ceasing,
 I peal and roar and pant and say,
 Thus let me laugh my life away.

III.

When dreams of fame my fancy fill,
 Sweet soothing dreams of verse and rhyme,
 That mark the poet's happy skill,
 And bid him live to latest time,
 Each rising thought
 With music fraught,
 All full, all flowing, nothing wanting,
 All harmonious, all enchanting,
 Oh thus, in rapt delights I say,
 Thus let me sing my life away !

IV.

Oh lovely woman, gen'rous wine,
 These potent pleasures let me quaff !
 Thy raptures, wit, oh make them mine !
 Oh let me drink and love and laugh !

In flowing verse

Let me rehearse

How well I've used your bounteous treasure ;

Then at last when full my measure,

Tho' pale my lip, I'll smile and say,

I've liv'd the best of lives away.

C. CLIFTON.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

OLIVER TRENCHARD.

London, Grosvenor Street.

W I T H I N a week, Oliver, we shall once more meet. What years of separation may afterward follow is more than I can divine. I surely need not tell thee that this thought of separation, were it not opposed by principle, would indeed be painful, and that it is at moments al-

most too mighty for principle itself. But we are the creatures of an omnipotent necessity; and there can be but little need to remind thee that a compliance with the apparently best should ever be an unrepining and cheerful act of duty.

I have had a conversation with Sir Arthur, very singular in its kind, which has again awakened sensations in their full force that had previously cost me many bitter struggles to allay. I began with informing him of my intention to go down to Wenbourne-Hill; after which I proceeded to tell him it was my design to embark for America.

He seemed surprised, and said he hoped not.

I answered I had reflected very fully on the plan, and that I believed it was

scarcely probable any reason should occur which could induce me to change my purpose.

The thing, he replied, might perhaps not be so entirely improbable as I supposed. His family had great obligations to me. I had even risked my life on various occasions for them. They thought my talents very extraordinary. In fine, Oliver, the good old gentleman endeavoured to say all the kind and, as he deemed them, grateful things his memory could supply; and added that, should I leave England without affording them some opportunity to repay their obligations, they should be much grieved. There were perhaps two or three very great difficulties in the way; but still he was not sure they might not be

be overcome. Not that he could say any thing positively, for matters were he must own in a very doubtful state. He was himself indeed very considerably uneasy, and undetermined: but he certainly wished me exceedingly well, and so with equal certainty at present did all his family. His daughter, his son, himself, were all my debtors.

The good old gentleman's heart overflowed, Oliver, and by its ebullitions raised a tumult in mine, which required every energy it possessed to repel. What could I answer, but that I had done no more for his family than what it was my duty to do for the greatest stranger; and that, if gratitude be understood to mean a
re-

remembrance of favours received, I and my family had for years indubitably been the receivers?

He still persisted however in endeavouring to dissuade me from the thought of quitting the kingdom. Not finding me convinced by his arguments, he hesitated, with an evident desire to say something which he knew not very well how to begin. All minds on such occasions are under strong impulses. My own wish that he should be explicit was eager, and I excited him to proceed. At last he asked if he might put a question to me; assuring me it was far from his intention to offend, but that he had some uneasy doubts which he could be very glad to have removed.

I desired

I desired him to interrogate me freely, and to assure himself that I would be guilty of no dissimulation.

He knew my sincerity, he said; but if when I heard I should think anything in what he asked improper, I past dispute had a right to refuse.

I answered that I suspected or rather was convinced I had no such right, and requested him to begin.

He again stammered, and at last said— I think, Mr. Henley, I have remarked some degree of esteem between you and my daughter—

He stopped—His desire not to wound my feelings was so evident that I determined to relieve him, and replied—

I believe, sir, I can now divine the subject of your question. You would be

be glad to know if any thing have passed between us, and what? Perhaps you ought to have been told without asking; but I am certain that concealment at present would be highly wrong.

I then repeated as accurately as my memory would permit, which is tolerably tenacious on this subject, all which Anna and I had reciprocally said and done. It was impossible, Oliver, to make this recapitulation with apathy. My feelings were awakened, and I assure thee the emotions of Sir Arthur were as lively as in such a mind thou couldst well suppose. The human heart seems to be meliorated and softened by age. He wept, a thing with him certainly not usual, at the recital of his daughter's heroic resolves in favour of
duty,

duty, and at her respect for parental prejudices. Her dread of rendering him unhappy made him even sob, and burst into frequent interjections of—"She is
"a dear girl! She is a heavenly girl!
"I always loved her! She is the de-
"light of my life, my soul's treasure!
"From her infancy to this hour, she was
"always an angel!"

After hearing me fully confirm him in his esteem and affection for so superlative a daughter, he added—You tell me, Mr. Henley, that you freely informed my daughter you thought it was even her duty to prefer you to all mankind, even though her father and friends should disapprove the match.

I did, sir. I spoke from conviction,
and

and should have thought myself culpable had I been silent.

Perhaps so. But that is very uncommon doctrine.

It was not merely that more felicity would have been secured to ourselves, but greater good I supposed would result to society.

I have heard you explain things of that kind before. I do not very well understand them, but give me leave to ask—Are you still of the same opinion?

I am, sir.—Not that I am so confident as I was—Mr. Clifton has a very astonishing strength of mind: and, should it be turned to the worthy purposes of which it is capable, I dare by no means decide positively in my own favour:

favour : and the decision which I now make against him is the result of the intimate acquaintance which I must necessarily have with my own heart, added to certain dubious appearances as to his which I know not how to reconcile. Of myself I am secure.

And of him you have some doubts ?

I have : but I ought in duty to add the appearances of their being unjust are daily strengthened.

Sir Arthur paused, ruminated, and again seemed embarrassed. At last he owned he knew not what to say : turn which way he would the obstacles were very considerable. His mind had really felt more distress, within these two months, than it had ever known before. He could resolve on nothing. Yet he
could

could not but wish I had not been quite so determined on going to America. There was no saying what course things might take. Mrs. Clifton was very ill, and in all probability could not live long. But again he knew not what to say. He certainly wished me very well—Very well—I was an uncommon young man. I was a gentleman by nature, which for aught he knew might be better than a gentleman by birth. The world had its opinions; perhaps they were just, perhaps unjust. He had been used to think with the world, but he had heard so much lately that he was not quite so positive as he had been—— [This, Oliver, reminded me of the power of truth; how it saps the strong holds of error and winds into the heart, and

and how incessantly its advocates ought to propagate it on every occasion.] He was not quite so well pleased as he had been with my father, but that was no fault of mine; he knew I had a very different manner of thinking. Still he must say it was what he very little expected. He hoped however that things would one way or other go more smoothly; and he concluded with taking my hand, pressing it very warmly, and adding with considerable earnestness—
“If you can think of changing your
“American project, pray do!—Pray
“do!—”

After which he left me with something like a heavy heart.

And now, Oliver, how ought I to act?
The opposing causes of these doubts and
diffi-

difficulties in his mind are evident. The circumstances which have occurred in my favour, being aided by the obstinate selfishness of my father, by his acquired wealth, and as I suppose by the embroiled state of Sir Arthur's affairs, have produced an unlooked for revolution in the sentiments of Sir Arthur. But is it not too late? Are not even the most tragical consequences to be feared from an opposition to Clifton? Nay, if his mind be what his words and behaviour speak, would not opposition be unjust? Were it not better with severe but virtuous resolution to repel these flattering and probably deceitful hopes, than by encouraging them to feed the cancer-worm of peace, and add new force to the enemy within, who rather
stunned

stunned than conquered is every moment ready to revive.

Neither is Sir Arthur master of events. Nor is his mind consistent enough to be in no danger of change.

My heart is sufficiently prone to indulge opposite sentiments, but it must be silenced; it must listen to the voice of truth.

Did I but better understand this Clifton, I should better know how to decide. That he looks up to her with admiration I am convinced. She seems to have discovered the true key to his understanding as well as to his affections. Even within this day or two, I have observed symptoms very much in his favour. How do I know but thus influenced he may become the first of mankind? The thought

thought restores me to a sense of right. Never, Oliver, shall self complacency make me guilty of what cannot but be a crime most heinous! If such a mind may by these means be gained which would otherwise be lost, shall it be extinguished by me? Would not an assassination like this outweigh thousands of common murders? Well may I shudder at such an act! Oliver, I am resolved. If there be power in words or in reason my father shall comply.

As far as I understand the human mind, there is and even should he persevere there always must be something to me enigmatical in this instance of its efforts in Clifton. Persevere however I most sincerely hope and even believe he will.

will. — But should he not? — The supposition is dreadful! — Anna St. Ives! — My heart sinks within me! — Can virtue like hers be vulnerable? — Surely not! — The more pure a woman is in principle the more secure would she be from common seducers. But, if the man can be found who possesses the necessary though apparently incompatible excess of folly and wisdom, there is a mode by which such a woman is more open to the arts of deceit than any other. And is not that woman Anna St. Ives? Nay more, if he be not a prodigy of even a still more extraordinary kind, is not that man Coke Clifton?

He came in the heyday of youthful pride, self-satisfied, self-convinced, root-

ed in prejudice but abundant in ideas. Argument made no impression; for where he ought to have listened he laughed. The weapons of wit never failed him; and, while he lanced them at others, they recoiled and continually lacerated himself. Of this he was insensible: he felt them not, or felt them but little. His haughtiness never flum-bered; and to oppose him was to irritate, not convince. For four months he continued pertinaciously the same; then, without any cause known to me, suddenly changed. It was indeed too sudden not to be alarming!

And yet my firm and cool answer to all this is that hypocrisy so foolish as well as atrocious is all but impossible—

Indeed

Indeed, Oliver, I do not seek to wrong him : I do not hunt after unfavourable conjectures, they force themselves upon me : or if I do it is unconsciously. The passions are strangely perverse : and if I am deceived, as I hope I am, it is they that misguide me.

Clifton has just been with me. Some correspondent from Paris has mentioned the visit paid to me instead of him by the Count de Beaunoir, but in a dark and unintelligible manner, and he came to enquire. I confess, Oliver, while I was answering his interrogatories, I seemed to feel that both you and I had drawn a false conclusion relative to se-

crecy; and that by concealment to render myself the subject of suspicion was an unworthy procedure. However as my motives were not indirect, whatever my silence might be, I answered without reserve and told him all that had passed; frankly owning my fears of his irritability as the reason why I did not mention the affair immediately.

He laughed at the Count's rhodomontade, acknowledged himself obliged to me, and allowed that at that time my fears were not wholly causeless. He behaved with ease and good humour, and left me without appearing to have taken any offence.

I shall be with thee on Tuesday. I know it will be a day of feasting

THE NOVEL.

125

to the family, and I will do my best
endeavour not to cast a damp on
the hilarity of benevolence and friend-
ship.

F. HENLEY.

G 3

LET-

LETTER LXXXVII.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES**TO****LOUISA CLIFTON.**

London, Grosvenor Street.

ALAS! Louisa, what are we?—
What are our affections, what our re-
solves? Taken at unguarded moments,
agitated, hurried away by passion, how
seldom have we for a day together rea-
son to be satisfied with our conduct?

Not pleased with myself, I doubt I
have

have given cause of displeasure to your brother. My father was in part the occasion : for a moment he made me forget myself——Louisa!—Frank Henley is going to America! He does not lightly resolve, and his resolution seems fixed!——Good God!—I—Louisa!—I am afraid I am a guilty creature!—Weak!—Very weak!—And is not weakness guilt?—But why should he leave us?—Where will he find hearts more alive to his worth?

Sir Arthur came to inform me of it: he had been conversing with him, and had endeavoured but without effect to dissuade him from his purpose. He came and begged me to try. I perhaps might be more successful.

There was a marked significance in his manner, and I asked him why?

Nay, my dear child, said he, and his heart seemed full, you know why. Mr. Henley has told me why.

What, sir, has he told?

Nothing, child—[Sir Arthur took my hand]—Nothing, but what is honourable to you—I questioned him, and you know he is never guilty of falsehood.

No, sir; he is incapable of it.

Well, Anna, try then to persuade him not to leave us. Though he is a very excellent young man, I am afraid he has not the best of fathers. I begin to feel I have not been so prudent as I might have been; and, if Mr.

Henley

Henley were to leave England, the father might attribute it to us, and—[Sir Arthur hesitated]—I have received some extraordinary letters from Abimelech, of which I did not at first see the full drift; but it is now clear; every thing corresponds, and my conversation with young Mr. Henley has confirmed all I had supposed. However he is a very good a very extraordinary young gentleman, and I could wish he would not go. I don't know what may happen.

Your brother came in and Sir Arthur left me, desiring me as he went to remember what he had said. Clifton after an apology asked—Does it relate to me? At that moment Frank entered. No, said I; it relates to one who I did not

think would have been so ready to forsake his friends !

A thousand thoughts had crowded to my mind ; a dread of having used him ungenerously, unjustly ; a recollection of all he had done and all he had suffered ; his enquiring, penetrating, and unbounded genius ; his superlative virtues ; a horror of his being banished his native country by me ; of his wandering among strangers, exposed to poverty, perils, and death, with the conviction in his heart that I had done him wrong !— My tumultuous feelings rushed upon me, overpowered me, and in a moment of enthusiasm I ran to him, snatched his hand, fell on my knee and exclaimed—
“ For the love of God, Mr. Henley, do not think of leaving us ! ”

Clifton like myself could not conquer the first assault of passion : he pronounced the word madam ! in a tone mingled with surprise and severe energy, which recalled me to myself——

You see, said I, turning to him, what an unworthy weak creature I am !—But Mr. Henley has taken the strangest resolution—— !

What, madam, said your brother, recovering himself, and with some pleantry, is he for a voyage to the moon ? Or does he wait the arrival of the next comet, to make the tour of the universe ?

Nay, answered I, you must join me, and not treat my poor petition with ridicule—You must not go, Mr. Henley ; indeed you must not ! I, Mr. Clifton, my father, my brother, we will none of

us hear of it! We are all your debtors, and it would be unjust in you to deprive us of every opportunity of testifying our friendship.

Your brother, Louisa, made an effort worthy of himself, repressed the error of his first feelings, assumed the gentle aspect of entreaty, and kindly joined me.

We are indeed your debtors, said he to Mr. Henley. But I hope it is not true. I hope there is no danger that you should forsake us. Where would you go? Where can you be so happy?

I mean first, replied Frank, to go to Wenbourne Hill; and after that my intentions are for America.

This, Louisa, brought on a long discussion. I and your brother both endeavoured

deavoured to convince him it was his duty to remain in England; that he could be more serviceable here, and would find better opportunities for effecting that good which he had so warmly at heart than in any other country.

He answered that, though he was not convinced by our arguments, he should think it his duty seriously to consider them. But we could not make him promise any thing further. Previous to his return from Wenbourne Hill he would determine.

Indeed, Louisa, this affair lies very heavily upon my mind. I am incessantly accusing myself as the cause of his exile. And am I not? By the manner of Sir Arthur I am sure he must have

have said something very highly in my praise. I have gone too far with your brother to recede: that is now impossible. It would be more flagrant injustice than even the wrong to Frank, if a wrong it be, and indeed, Louisa, I dread it is!—Indeed I do!—I dread it even with a kind of horror!

I thought reason would have appeased these doubts ere this; but every occasion I find calls them forth with unabated vigour. Surely this mental blindness must be the result of neglect. Had we but the will, the determination, it might be removed. Oh how reprehensible is my inconsistency!

The rapid decline of Mrs. Clifton grieves me deeply. Your brother too has frequently mentioned it with feelings
honourable

honourable to his heart. He is now more than ever sensible of her worth. He has been with me since I began to write this letter, and there is not the least appearance of remaining umbrage on his mind. It was indeed but of short duration, though too strong and sudden not to be apparent.

All kindness, peace, and felicity be with you.

A. W. ST. IVES.

LET-

 LETTER LXXXVIII.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

I WILL curse no more, Fairfax.
 Or, if curse I do, it shall be at my own
 fatuity. I will not be the dilatory, lan-
 guid, ranting, moralizing Hamlet of
 the drama; that has the vengeance of
 hell upon his lips and the charity of hea-
 ven

ven in his heart. I will use not speak daggers—

Fairfax, I am mad!—Raging!—The smothered and pent-up mania must have vent—What! Was not the page sufficiently black before?—I am amazed at my own infatuation! My very soul spurns at it!—But 'tis past—Deceitful, damned sex!—Idiot that I was, I began to fancy myself beloved!—I!—Blind, deaf, insensate driver!—Torpid, blockish, brainless mammet!—Most sublime ass!—Oh for a bib and barley sugar, with the label *Meacock* pinned before and behind!—

Fairfax, I never can forgive my own absurd and despicable stupidity!—Marriage?—What, with a woman in whose eye the perfect impression and hated form

form of a mean rival is depicted?—In colours glowing hot!—Who lives, revels, triumphs in her heart!—I marry such a woman?—I?—

“I had rather be a toad,

“And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,

“Than keep a corner in the thing I love.

“For other’s use.”

I am too full of phrensy, Fairfax, to tell thee what I mean: but she has given me another proof, more damning even than all the former, of the gluttony with which her soul gorges. Her gloating eye devours him; ay, I being present. Nay, were I this moment in her arms, her arms would be clasping him, not me: with him she would carouse, nor would any thing like me exist—Contagion!—Poison and boiling oil!—

Never

Never before was patience so put to the proof—My danger was extreme. With rage flaming in my heart, I was obliged to wear complacency, satisfaction and smiles on my countenance.

The fellow has determined to ship himself for America—Would it were for the bottomless pit!—And had you beheld her panic?—St. Luke's collected maniacs at the full of the moon could not have equalled her!—'Twas well indeed her frantic outrage was so violent, or I had been detected and all had been lost—As it was I half betrayed myself—The fellow's eye glanced at me. However it gave me my cue; and, all things considered, I afterward performed to a miracle. Her own enthusiastic torrent swept all before it, and gave me time.

She

She was in an ecstasy ; reasoning, sup-
plicating, conjuring, panting. I, her
friends, the whole world must join her :
and join her I did. It was the very re-
lief of which hypocrisy stood in need. I
entreated this straight-backed youth,
stiff in determination, to condescend to
lend a pitying ear to our petitions ; to
suffer us to permeate his bowels of com-
passion, and avert this fatal and impend-
ing cloud, fraught with evils, misery,
and mischief—

But marry no!—It could not be!—
Sentence was passed—He had been at
the trouble to make a pair of scales, and
knew the weight to a scruple of every
link in the whole chain of cause and ef-
fect—Teach him, truly!—Advise him!—
Move him!—When? Who? How?—

At

At last compliance, willing to be royally gracious, said, Well it would consider— Though there was but little hope—Nothing it had heard had any cogency of perscrutation—But, in fine, it would be clement, and consider.

Do you not see this fellow, Fairfax? Is he not now before your eyes? Is he not the most consummate——? But why do I trouble myself a moment about him?—It is her!—Her!—

Nor is this all. Did that devil that most delights in mischief direct every concurring circumstance, they could not all and each be more uniform, more coercive to the one great end. This poor dotterel, Sir Arthur, is playing fast and loose with me. He has been at his soundings—He!—Imbecile animal!— Could wish there were not so many difficulties—

ficulties—Is afraid they cannot be all removed—Has his doubts and his fears—Twenty thousand pounds is a large sum, and Mrs. Clifton is very positive—His own affairs much less promising than he supposed—Then by a declension of hems, hums, and has, he descended to young Mr. Henley—A very extraordinary young gentleman!—A very surprising youth!—One made on purpose as it were for plum-cake days, high festivals, and raree show!—A prodigy!—Not begotten, born or bred in the dull blind-man's-buff way of simple procreation; but sent us on a Sunday morning down Jacob's ladder!—Then for obligations to him, count them who could!—He must first study more arithmetic!—And as for affection it was a very wayward

ward thing—Not always in people's power—There was no knowing what was best—The hand might be given and the heart be wanting—And with respect to whether the opinions of the world ought to be regarded, good truth he knew not. Marry! The world was much more ready to blame others than to amend itself: and he had been almost lately persuaded not to care a fig for the world. But for his part he was a godly christian, and wished all for the best. He had faith, hope, and charity, which were enough for one.

Do not imagine, Fairfax, the poor dotard would have dared to betray himself thus far, had not I presently perceived his drift and wormed him of these

these dismal cogitations of the spirit. He beat about, and hovered, and fluttered, and chirped mournfully, like the poor infatuated bird that beholds the serpent's mouth open, into which it is immediately to drop and be devoured. However, having begun, I was determined to make him unburden his whole heart. If hereafter he can possibly find courage to face me, in order to reproach, I have my lesson ready. "Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, sinner."

Gangrened as my heart is, I still find a satisfaction in this self convalescence. The lady of mellifluous speech shall suborn no more; no more shall lull me into beatific slumbers. I have recovered

from my trance, and what I dreamed was celestial I will demonstrate to be mere woman.

From his own lips I learn that this insolent scoundrel received a visit from the Count de Beaunoir, which was intended for me : and, out of tender pity to my body, lest, God 'ld us, it should get a drilling, he did bestow some trifle of that wit and reason of which he has so great a superflux upon the Count, thereby to turn aside his wrathful ire.

I heard the gentleman tell his tale, and tickle his imagination with the remembrance of his own doctiloquy, with infinite composure ; and, whenever I put a question, took care first to prepare a smile. Every thing was well, better could not be.

With respect to *Monsieur le Comte*, I'll take some opportunity to whisper a word in his ear. It is not impossible, Fairfax, but that I may visit Paris even within this fortnight. Not that I can pretend to predict. They shall not think I fly them, should any soul among them dare to dream of vengeance. I know the Count to be as vain of his skill in the sword as he is of his pair of watch strings, his Paris-Birmingham snuff-box, or the bauble that glitters on his finger. I think I can give him a lesson: at least I mean to try.

My mother's health declines apace. I know not whether it may not shortly be necessary for me to visit her. The loss of her will afflict me, but in all appearance

pearance it is inevitable, and I fear not far distant.

Once more, Fairfax, should you again fall in company with the Count, and he should give himself the most trifling airs, assure him that I will do myself the honour to embrace him within a month at farthest from that date, be it when it will.

Adieu.

C. CLIFTON.

H

H 2

LET-

LETTER LXXXIX.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES**TO****LOUISA CLIFTON.**

London, Grosvenor-Street.

HE is gone, Louisa; has left us; his purpose unchanged, his heart oppressed, and his mind intent on promoting the happiness of those by whom he is exiled. And what am I, or who, that I should do him this violence?

What

What validity have these arguments of rank, relationship, and the world's opprobrium? Are they just? He refuted them: so he thought, and so *persists* to think. And who was ever less partial, or more severe to himself?

Louisa, my mind is greatly disturbed. His high virtues, the exertion of them for the peculiar protection of me and my family, and the dread of committing an act of unpardonable injustice, if unjust it be, are images that haunt and tantalize me incessantly.

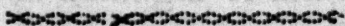
If my conclusions have been false, and if his asserted claims be true, how shall I answer those which I have brought upon myself? The claims of your brother, which he urges without remission, are still stronger. They have been

H 3 countenanced,

countenanced, admitted, and encouraged. I cannot recede. What can I do but hope, ardently hope, Frank Henley is in an error, and that he himself may make the discovery? Yet how long and fruitless have these hopes been! My dilemma is extreme; for, if I have been mistaken, act how I will, extreme must be the wrong I commit!

Little did I imagine a moment so full of bitter doubt and distrust as this could come. Were I but satisfied of the rectitude of my decision, there are no sensations which I could not stifle, no affections which I could not calm, nor any wandering wishes but what I could reprove to silence. But the dread of a flagrant, an odious injustice distracts me, and I know not where or of whom to seek

seek consolation. Even my Louisa, the warm friend of my heart, cannot determine in my favour.



Your brother has been with me. He found me in tears, enquired the cause, and truth demanded a full and unequivocal confidence. I shewed him what I had been writing. You may well imagine, Louisa, he did not read it with total apathy. But he suppressed his own feelings with endeavours to give relief to mine. He argued to shew me my motives had been highly virtuous. He would not say—[His candour delighted me, Louisa.]—He would not say there was no ground for my fears : he was interested and might be partial. He be-

H 4 lieved

lieved indeed I had acted in strict conformity to the purest principles; but, had I even been mistaken, the origin of my mistake was so dignified as totally to deprive the act of all possible turpitude.

He was soothing and kind, gave high encomiums to Frank, took blame to himself for the error of his former opinions, and, reminding me of the motives which first induced me to think of him, tenderly asked if I had any new or recent cause to be weary of my task.

What could I answer? What, but that I was delighted with the rapid change perceptible in his sentiments, and with the ardour with which his enquiries were continued?

Frank Henley is by this time at Wenbourne Hill. You will see him.

Plead

Plead our cause, Louisa: urge him to remain among us. Condescend even to enforce my selfish motive, that he would not leave me under the torturing supposition of having banished him from a country which he was born to enlighten, reform, and bless!

There is indeed another argument; but I know not whether it ought to be mentioned. Sir Arthur owns he is in the power of the avaricious Abimelech, and I believe is in dread of foreclosures that might even eject him from Wenbourne Hill. This man must have been an early and a deep adventurer in the trade of usury, or he never could have gained wealth so great as he appears to have amassed!

Past incidents, with all of which you

H 5

are

are acquainted, have given Sir Arthur a high opinion of Frank : and this added to his own fears, I am persuaded, would lead him to consider a union between us at present with complacency, were not such an inclination opposed by other circumstances. The open encouragement that he himself has given to Clifton is one, and it is strengthened by all the interest of the other branches of our family. Your brother is highly in favour with Lord Fitz Allen. My aunt Wenbourne equally approves the match, and Clifton and my brother Edward are become intimate. As to me, reason, consistency, and my own forward conduct, oblige me to be the enemy of Frank.

Louisa, I scarcely know what I write !

Think not I have abandoned myself to
the capricious gusts of passion; or that
my love of uncontaminated and rigorous
virtue is lessened. No, it is indecision;
it is an abhorrence of injustice which
shake and disquiet me.

Write to me; let me know your
sentiments; and particularly how far
your application to Frank, when you
have made it, is successful. I am anx-
ious to receive your letter, for I know
it will inspire fortitude, of which I am in
great, great need.

A. W. ST. IVES.

LETTER XC.

LOUISA CLIFTON

TO

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES.

Rose-Bank.

OH my dearest and ever dear Anna, what shall I say, how shall I assuage doubts that take birth in principles so pure and a heart so void of guile? I know not. I have before acknowledged the mist is too thick for me to penetrate.

The

The worthy the noble-minded Frank has been with us, and I could devise no better way than to shew him your letter. He was greatly moved, and collecting all the firmness of his soul resolutely declared that, since your peace was so deeply concerned, be his own sensations what they might, he would conquer them and remain in England. The heart-felt applause he bestowed upon you was almost insupportably affecting. He has indeed a deep sense of your uncommon worth; and he alone I fear on earth is capable of doing it justice.

But things have taken a different turn; and what can the best of us do, when involved as we continually are in doubt and difficulty, but act as you do,
with

with impartial self denial, and the most rigid regard to truth and virtue.

Alas, dear Anna, I too am in need of support, and in search of fortitude!—My mother!—She will not be long among us!—A heart more benevolent, a mind more exalted—! She calls!—I hear her feeble voice!—Not even my Anna must rob her of my company, for those few remaining moments she has yet to come. I am her last consolation.

L. CLIFTON.

I expect you will this post receive a letter from Frank, that will speak more effectually to your heart than I have either the time to do or the power.

L E T.

LETTER XCI.

FRANK HENLEY**TO****ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES.**

MADAM,*Wenbourne-Hill.*

YOUR generous and zealous friend has thought proper to shew me your letter. I will not attempt to describe the sensations it excited ; but, as your peace of mind is precious to me, and more precious still perhaps to the interests of society,

society, and since my departure would occasion alarms and doubts so strong, I am determined to stay. My motives for going I thought too forcible and well founded to be overpowered; nor could they perhaps have been vanquished by any less cause. If one of us must suffer the warfare of contending sentiments and principles, let it be me. It was to fly from and if possible forget or subdue them that I projected such a voyage. Our duties to society must not cede to any effeminate compassion for ourselves. We are both enough acquainted with those duties to render us more than commonly culpable, should we be guilty of neglect.

To describe my weakness, and the contention to which my passions have been

been lately subject, might tend to awaken emotions in you which ought to be estranged from your mind. Our lot is cast: let us seek support in those principles which first taught us reciprocal esteem, nor palliate our desertion of them by that self pity which would become our reproach. We have dared to make high claims, form high enterprises, and assert high truths; let us shew ourselves worthy of the pretensions we have made, and not by our proper weakness betray the cause of which we are enainoured.

You will not—no, you are too just—I am sure, madam, you will not attribute resolutions like these, which are more (infinitely more) painful to the heart
than

than they ought to be, to any light or unworthy change of sentiment. Superior gifts, superior attainments, and superior virtues inevitably beget admiration, in those who discover them, for their possessors. Admiration is the parent of esteem, and the continuance and increase of this esteem is affection, or, in its purest and best sense, love. To say I would not esteem and would not love virtue, and especially high and unusual virtue, would be both folly and guilt.

But you have taught me how pure and self-denying this love may be. Oh that the man of your choice may but become all you hope, and all of which his uncommon powers are capable! Oh
that

that I may but see you as happy as you deserve to be, and I think I shall then not bestow much pity upon myself.

I have forborne, madam, to intrude the petty disquiets of another kind, from which as you will readily imagine I cannot have been wholly free. Need I say how much I disapprove my father's views, and the mode by which he would have them accomplished? There is no effort I will not make to conquer and remove this obstacle. It wounds me to the heart that you, the daughter of his benefactor, should for a moment be dependant on his avarice. The injury and iniquity are equally revolting, and there are moments when my prejudices falsely accuse me of being a participator in the guilt.

I have

I have had two conversations with my father: they both were animated; but, though he was very determined, his resolution begins to fail; and, as I have justice on my side and am still more determined than he, I have no doubt that in a few days every thing which Sir Arthur has required of him he will be willing to undertake.

However as in a certain sense all is doubtful which is yet to be done, perhaps strict prudence would demand that Sir Arthur should not be led to hope till success is ascertained; of which I will not delay a moment to send you information.

I am, &c.

F. HENLEY.

LET.

LETTER XCII.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

THE moment, Fairfax, the trying, the great, the glorious moment approaches. Every possible contributing cause calls aloud for expedition, and reprobates delay. This gardening fellow is gone. For his absence I thank him, but not for the resolute spirit with which
he

he intends to attack his father and make him yield. He has a tongue that would silence the congregated clamours of the Sorbonne, and dumb-found Belial himself in the hall of Pandemonium. 'Tis certain he has a tough morsel to encounter, and yet I fear he will succeed.

This would destroy all——Marry her?—No!—By heaven, no! If the hopes of Abimelech be not stubborn enough to persevere, they must and shall be strengthened. His refusal is indispensably necessary in every view, unless the view of marriage, which I once more tell you, Fairfax, I now detest. I should have no plea with her, were that of delay removed.

What is still worse, this delay may be removed by another and more painful cause.

cause. My mother it appears declines rapidly : her death is even feared, and should it happen, I cannot pretend to insist on the obstacles which her maternal cares and provisionary fears have raised.

I can think of no certain expedient, for this Abimelech, but that of an anonymous letter. Neither the writing nor the style must appear to be mine; nor must the hand that writes it understand its purport. Tyros and ignorant as my opponents are, in the tricks and intrigues of amorous stratagem, still they have too much understanding not to be redoubtable.

Those old necromancers Subtlety and Falsehood must forge the magic armour, and the enchanted shield, under which I

fight.

fight. Like wizards of yore, they must render me invisible; and the fair form of the foolish Clifton they have imagined must only be seen.

Honest Ab y, or I mistake him, is too worthy a fellow to desert so good a cause.

And this cloud-capt lady, whose proud turrets I have sworn to level with the dust, will not descend to plead the approaching death of my mother, when I shall urge the injustice of delay—Ay, Fairfax, the injustice! I mean to command, to dare, to overawe; that is the only oratory which can put her to the rout. She loves to be astonished, and astonished she shall be. If I do not shrink from myself her fall is infallible.

My heart exults in the coming joy! Never more will the milky pulp of com-

passion

passion rise to mar the luxurious meal !
She has been writing to the fellow,
Fairfax; ay and has shewn me her letter !
For, let her but imagine that truth, or
virtue, or principle, or any other abortive
being of her own creation, requires her
to follow the whims of her disjointed
fancy, and what frantic folly is there of
which she is incapable ?

'Tis maddening to recollect, but she
doats on the fellow ; absolutely doats !
I am the tormenting demon that has ap-
peared to interrupt her happiness ; she
the devoted victim, sacrificed to shield
me from harm ! The thought of se-
paration from him is distracting, and
every power must be conjured up to
avert the horrid woe !

Never before did my feelings support

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I

such

such various and continual attacks; never did I endure infidelity so open or insult so unblushing. But, patience; the day of vengeance is at hand, or rather is here! This moment will I fly and take it! Expect to hear “of battles, sieges, “disastrous chances, and of moving “accidents; but not of hair breadth “’scapes!”—Escape she cannot! I go! She falls!

C. CLIFTON.

LET.

LETTER XCIII.

FRANK HENLEY

TO

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES.

Wenbourne-Hill.

IT is now a week since I wrote to you, madam, at which time I took some pleasure in acquainting you with my hopes of success. These hopes continued to increase, and my father had almost promised to agree to the just proposals I made, when two days ago he

suddenly and pertinaciously changed his opinion.

I am sorry to add that he now appears to be much more determined than ever, and that I am wholly astonished at and wholly unable to account for this alteration of sentiment. I delayed sending you the intelligence by yesterday's post, hoping it was only a temporary return of former projects, which I could again reason away. But I find him so positive, so passionate, and so inaccessible to reason, that I am persuaded some secret cause has arisen of which I am ignorant. Yet do not be dejected, dear madam, nor imagine I will lightly give it up as a lost cause—No—My mind is too much affected and too earnestly bent
on

on its object not to accomplish it, if possible.

I received your letter *, but have no thanks that can equal the favour. I hope the emotions to which it gave birth were worthy such a correspondent. I can truly and I believe innocently say my heart sympathises in all your joys, hopes, and apprehensions; and that my pleasure, at the progress of Mr. Clifton in the discovery of truth and the practice of virtue, is but little less than your own.

I am glad you thought proper to be cautious of giving Sir Arthur any unconfirmed expectations; and I promise

* It contained the state of her feelings, with which the reader is already acquainted, but no new incidents; for which reason it is omitted.

you to exert every effort to effect a propitious change in the present temper and resolutions of my father.

I am, dear madam, &c.

F. HENLEY.

L ET

LETTER XCIV.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.*London, Dover Street.*

WHEN last I wrote my resolution was taken, and I determined on immediate attack. But I went in a seeming unlucky moment; though I much mistake if it were not the very reverse.

The supposed misfortune I had foreseen fell upon me. The 'squire of

preachers had fairly overcome his father's obstinacy, and induced him to give ground! Instead of having received the news of his determined persistency, I found her with a letter in her hand, informing her that he had begun to relent, and that his full acquiescence was expected.

To have commenced the battle at so inauspicious a moment would have been little worthy of a great captain. My resolution was instantly formed.

After acting as much ecstasy as I could call up, I hastened home and wrote my projected letter to honest Aby. I threw my hints together in Italian, that they might not be understood by the agent whom I meant to employ. This was my groom, an English lad whom I met
with

with at Paris, who spells well and writes a good hand. I pretended I had crushed my finger and could not hold a pen; and, without letting him understand the intent of my writing, or even that it was a letter, I dictated to him as follows; a transcript of which I send to you, Fairfax, first that you may sigh and see what the blessing of a ready invention is, and next as an example which you may copy, or at least from which you may take a hint, if ever you should have occasion.

“SO you have been persuaded at
“last to give up your point, my old
“friend! And can you swallow this
“tale of a tub? A fine cock and a
“bull story has been dipped in your

“ears? Don’t believe a word on’t.
“I know the whole affair; and, though
“you don’t know me, be assured I mean
“you well: and I tell you that if you
“will but hold out stoutly every thing
“will soon be settled to your heart’s
“desire. She is dying for love of him,
“and he can’t see it! She will never
“have the man they mean for her; I
“can assure you of that; and what is
“more he will never have her. What
“I tell you I know to be true. No
“matter who I am. If I knew nothing
“of the affair how could I write to you?
“And if the advice I give be good,
“what need you care whom it comes
“from? Only don’t let your son see
“this; if you do it will spoil all. You
“perceive how blind he is to his own
“good,

“good, and how positive too. Keep
“your counsel, but be resolute. Look
“around you, persist in your own plans,
“and the hall, the parks, the gardens,
“the meadows, the lands you see are
“all your own! I am sure you cannot
“misunderstand me. But mark my
“words; be close; keep your thoughts
“to yourself. You know the world:
“You have made your own fortune;
“don’t mar it by your own folly. Tell
“no tales, I say; nor, if you are a wife
“man, give the least hint that you have
“a friend in a corner.”

This I dictated to my amanuensis,
pretending to translate it out of the pa-
per I held in my hand, and which I took
care to place before him, so that he

should see it was really written in a foreign language. I likewise once or twice counterfeited a laugh at what I was reading, and ejaculated to myself—
“ This is a curious scrap !”

When he had finished I gave him half a crown, praised his hand-writing, which I told him I wanted to see, for perhaps I might find him better employment than currying of horses, and sent him about his business too much pleased and elated, and his ideas led into too distant a train to harbour the least suspicion.

Nor did my precautions end here. I immediately ordered my horse, and rode without any attendant full speed to Hounslow. I there desired the landlord of an inn at which I am personally

sonally known, though not by name, to send one of his own lads, post, to the market town next to Wenbourne-Hill, and there to hire a countryman, without explaining who or what he himself was, to deliver the letter into the hands of honest Aby. I requested the landlord to choose an intelligent messenger, and backed my request with a present bribe and a future promise.

My plan was too well laid to miscarry, and accordingly yesterday a mournful account arrived, from the young orator, that judgment is reversed, and he in imminent danger of being cast in costs.

And now, Fairfax, once more I go!—Expedition, resolution, a torrent
of

of words, a storm of passion, and the pealing thunder that dies away in descending rains! The word is Anna St. Ives, revenge, and victory!

C. CLIFTON.

LET.

LETTER XCV.

COKE CLIFTON

TO

GUY FAIRFAX.

London, Dover Street.

ONCE more, Fairfax, here am I.

Well! And how—?

Not so fast, good sir. All things in their turn. The story shall be told just as it happened, and your galloping curiosity must be pleased to wait.

I knew my time, the hour when she
would

would retire to her own apartment, and the minute when I might find admission; for she is very methodical, as all your very wise people more or less are. I had given Laura her lesson; that is, had told her that I had something very serious to say to her mistress that morning, and desired her to take care to be out of the way, that she might be sure not to interrupt us. The fly-jade looked with that arch significance which her own experience had taught her, and left me with—"Oh! Mr. Clifton!"

And here I could make a remark, but that would be anticipating my story.

You may think, Fairfax, that, marshalled as my hopes and fears were in battle

battle array, something of inward agitation would be apparent. In reality not only some but much was visible. It caught her attention, and luckily caught. I attempted to speak, and stammered. A false step as it would have been most fatal so was it more probable at the moment of onset than afterward, when the heated imagination should have collected, arranged, and begun to pour forth its stores.

The philosophy of the passions was the theme I first chose, though at the very moment when my spirits were all fluttering with wild disorder. But my faltering voice, which had I wished I could not have commanded, aided me; for the tremulous state of my frame threw hers into most admirable confusion!

“What

“What was it that disturbed me?

“What had I to communicate?—She

“never saw me thus before! It was

“quite alarming!”

Madam—[Observe, Fairfax, I am now the speaker: but I shall remind you of such trifles no more. If you cannot distinguish the interlocutors, you deserve not to be present at such a dialogue.] Madam, I own my mind is oppressed by thoughts which, however just in their purpose, however worthy in their intent, inspire all that hesitation, that timidity, that something like terror, which I scarcely know how to overcome. Yet what should I fear? Am I not armed by principle and truth? Why shun a declaration of thoughts that are founded in right; or tremble like a
coward

coward that doubted of his cause? I am your scholar, and have learned to subdue sensations of which the judgment disapproves. From you likewise have I learned to avow tenets that are demonstrable; and not to shrink from them because I may be in danger of being misconstrued, or even suspected. Pardon me! I do you wrong. Your mind is superior to suspicion. It is a mean and odious vice, and never could I esteem the heart in which it found place. I forget myself, and talk to you as I would to a being of an infinitely lower order.

Mr. Clifton—

Do not let your eye reprove me! I have not said what is not; and who better knows than you how much it
is

is beneath us to refrain from saying what is?

Do not keep me in this suspense! I am sure there is something very uncommon in your thoughts! Speak!

Thoughts will be sometimes our masters: the best and wisest of us cannot always command them. That I have daily repressed them, have struggled against rooted prejudices and confirmed propensities, and have ardently endeavoured to rise to that proud eminence toward which you have continually pointed, you are my witness.

I am.

Protracted desires, imagined pleasures, and racking pains [and oh how often have they all been felt!] no longer sway me. They have been repulsed, disdained,

dained, trodden under foot. You have taught me how shameful it is to be the slave of passion. Truth is now my object, justice my impulse, and virtue, high virtue my guide.

Oh, Clifton! Speak thus, be thus ever!

The moment it appeared, I knew that delay was ominous.

Nay, Clifton—

Hear me, madam!—Yes ominous! I see no end to it, have every thing to fear from it, and nothing to hope—There is a thought—Ay, that verges to madness!—I have a rival—! But I will forget it—at least will try. Who can deny that it is excruciating?—But I am actuated at present by another and a nobler motive. You know, madam,
what

what you found me; and I hope you are not quite unconscious of what you have made me. You have taught me principles to which I mean to adhere, and truths I intend to assert; have opened views to me of immense magnitude! In your society I am secure. But habits are inveterate, and easily revived; and were I torn from you, I myself know not the degree of my own danger. Yes, madam, fain indeed would I forget there is such a person as Frank Henley! Yet how? By what effort, what artifice? Say! Teach me! What though my heart reproaches me with its own foibles, who can prevent possibilities, mere possibilities, in a case like this, from being absolute torments? My soul pants and
aches

aches after certainty ! The moment I ask myself what doubt there can be of Anna St. Ives, I answer none, none ! Yet the moment after, forgetting this question, alarms, probabilities, past scenes and intolerable suppositions swarm to assault me, without relaxation or mercy.

Clifton, you said you had a nobler motive.

I merit the reproach, madam. These effusions burst from me, are unworthy of me, and I disclaim them. You have pardoned many of my strays and mistakes, and I am sure will pardon this.

[For the love of fame, Fairfax, do not suffer the numerous master-strokes of this dialogue to escape you. I cannot stay to point them out.] Yes, madam, I have

have a nobler motive ! Yet, enlarged as your mind is, I know not how to prepare you calmly to listen to me, without alarm and without prevention. Strange as it may seem, I dread to speak truth even to you !

If truth it be, speak, and fear nothing. Propose but any adequate and worthy purpose, and there is no pain, no danger, no disgrace from which if I know myself I would shrink.

No disgrace, madam ?

Your words and looks both doubt me—Put me to the proof. Propose I say an adequate and worthy purpose, and let your test be such as nature shudders at ; then despise me and my principles if I recoil.

The union of marriage demands reci-

procal, unequivocal, and unbounded confidence; for how can we pretend to love those whom we cannot trust? The man who is unworthy this unbounded confidence is most unworthy to be a husband; and it were even better he should shew his bad qualities, by basely and dishonestly deserting her who had committed herself body and soul to his honour, than that such qualities should discover themselves after marriage. There is no disgrace can equal the torment of such an alliance.

I grant it.

You have attained that noble courage which dares to question the most received doctrines, and bring them to the test of truth. Who better than you can appreciate the falsehood and the force

of the prejudices of opinion? Yet are you sure, madam, that even you are superior to them all?

Far otherwise. Would I were! I am much too ignorant for such high such enviable perfection.

But is it not possible that some of the most common, and if I dared I should say the most narrow, the most self-evident of these prejudices may sway and terrify you from the plain path of equity? Dare you look the world's unjust contumelies stedfastly in the face? Dare you answer for yourself that you will not shudder at the performance of what you cannot but acknowledge, nay have acknowledged to be an act of duty?

I confess your preparation is alarming, and makes me half suspect myself,
half

half desirous to retract all I have thought, all I have asserted! Yet I think I dare do whatever justice can require.

You think—?

Once more bring me to the proof. I feel a conscious [Again you make me a braggart.] a virtuous certainty.

In opposition to the whole world, its prepossessions, reproofs, revilings, persecutions, and contempt?

The picture is terrifying, but ought not to be, and I answer yes; in opposition to and in defiance of them all.

Then—You are my wife!

How?

Be firm! Start not from the truth! You are my wife! Ask yourself the meaning of the word. Can set forms and ceremonies unite mind to mind?

And if not they, what else? What but community of sentiments, similarity of principles, reciprocal sympathies, and an equal ardour for and love of truth? Can it be denied?

It cannot.

You are my wife, and I have a right to the privileges of a husband!

A right?

An absolute, an indefeasible right!

You go too fast!

They are your own principles: they are principles founded on avowed and indisputable truths. I claim justice from you!

Clifton!

Justice!

This is wrong!—Surely it is wrong!—
This cannot be!

Instead

Instead of the chaste husband, such as better times and spirits of higher dignity have known, who comes with lips void of guile the rightful claimant of an innocent heart, in which suspicion never harboured, imagine me to be a traitorous wretch, who poorly seeks to gratify a momentary, a vile, a brutal passion! Imagine me, I say, such a creature if you can! Once I should have feared it; but you have taught my thoughts to soar above such vulgar terrors. My appeal is not to your passions, but your principles. Inspired by that refulgent ardour which animates you, with a noble enthusiasm you have yourself bid me put you to the proof. You cannot, will not, dare not be unjust!

And now, Fairfax, behold her in the

very state I wished ! Cowed, silenced, overawed ! Her ideas deranged, her tongue motionless, wanting a reply, her eyes wandering in perplexity, her cheeks growing pale, her lips quivering, her body trembling, her bosom panting ! Behold I say the wild disorder of her look ! Then turn to me, and read secure triumph, concealed exultation, and bursting transport on my brow ! While impetuous, fierce, and fearless desire is blazing in my heart, and mounting to my face ! See me in the very act of fastening on her ! And see—— !

Curse !—Everlasting curses pursue and catch my perfidious evil genius !—See that old Incubus Mrs. Clarke enter, with a letter in her hand that had arrived express, and was to be delivered instantly !—

instantly!—Our mutual perturbation did not escape the prying witch; my countenance red, hers pale—The word begone! maddened to break loose from my impatient tongue. My eyes however spoke plainly enough, and the hag was unwillingly retiring, when a faint—
“Stay, Mrs. Clarke”—called her back!

As I foreboded, it was all over for this time! She opened the letter. What its contents were I know not; and impossible as it is that they should relate to me, I yet wish I did. I am sure by her manner they were extraordinary. I could not ask while that old beldam was present [Had she been my grandmother, on this occasion I should have abused her.] and the eye of the young lady very plainly told me she wished me away. It

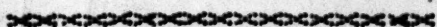
was prudent to make the best retreat possible, and with the best grace: I therefore bowed and took my leave; very gravely telling her I hoped she would seriously consider what I had said, and again emphatically pronounced the word *justice*!

You have now, Fairfax, been a spectator of the scene; and if its many niceties have escaped you, if you have not been hurried away, as I was, by the tide of passion, and amazed at the successful sophistries which flowed from my tongue, sophistries that are indeed so like truth that I myself at a cooler moment should have hesitated to utter them; if I say the deep art with which the whole was conducted, and the high acting with which I personified the only possible Being that could

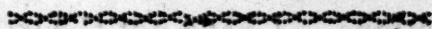
could subjugate Anna St. Ives do not excite your astonishment, why then you really are a dull fellow ! But I know you too well, Fairfax, to do you such injustice as this supposes. Victory had declared for me. I read her thoughts. They were labouring for an answer, I own ; but she was too much confounded. And would I have given her time to rally ? No ! I should then have merited defeat.

The grand difficulty however is vanquished : she will hear me the next time with less surprise, and the emotions of passion, genuine honest mundane passion, must take their turn ; for not even she, Fairfax, can be wholly exempt from these emotions. I have not the least fear that my eloquence should fail me, and

absolute victory excepted, I could not have wished for greater success.



I cannot forget this letter. It disturbs and pesters my imagination. I supposed it to be from Edward, who has been at Bath; but my valet has just informed me he is returned. Perhaps it is from my sister; and if so, by its coming express, my mother is dead! I really fear it bodes me harm—I am determined to rid myself of this painful suspense. I will therefore step to Grosvenor-street. I may as well face the worst at once. You shall hear more when I return.



Oh, Fairfax! I could curse most copiously,

piously, in all heathenish and christian tongues ! She has shut herself up, and refuses to see me ! This infernal fellow Frank Henley is returned too. He arrived two hours after the express. I suspect it came from him ; nay I suspect—Flames and furies !—I must tell you !

I have seen Laura, though scarcely for two minutes. She is afraid she is watched. It is all uproar, confusion, and suspicion at Sir Arthur's. But the great curse is my groom, the lad that I told you copied my letter to Abimelech, has been sent for and privately catechised by her and her paramour ! And what confirms this most tormenting of all conjectures is the absence of the fellow : he has not been home since, nor at the sta-

bles, though he was always remarkably punctual, but has sent the key; so that he has certainly absconded.

Had I not been a stupid booby, had I given Laura directions to keep out of the way of Anna, but in the way of taking messages for her, she might have received the express, and all might have been well. Such a blockheadly blunder well deserves castigation!

I'll deny the letter, Fairfax. They have no proof, and I'll swear through thick and thin rather than bring myself into this universal, this damnatory disgrace! I know indeed she will not believe me; and I likewise know that now it must be open war between us. For do not think that I will suffer myself to be thus shamefully beaten out of the field.

No,

No, by Lucifer and his Tophet ! I will die a foaming maniac, fettered in straw, ere that shall happen ! If not by persuasion, she shall be mine by chicanery, or even by force. I will perish, Fairfax, sooner than desist !

Oh for an agent, a coadjutor worthy of the cause ! He must and shall be found.

The uncle and aunt must be courted : the father I expect will side with her. The brother too must be my partisan ; for it will be necessary I should maintain an intercourse, and the shew of still wishing for wedlock.

I am half frantic, Fairfax ! To be baffled by such an impossible accident, after having acted my part with such supreme excellence, is insupportable ! But
the

the hag Vengeance shall not slip me !
 No ! I have fangs to equal hers, ay and
 will fasten her yet ! I have been injured,
 insulted, frustrated, and fiends seize me
 if I relent !

C. CLIFTON.

LET.

LETTER XCVI.

ANNA WENBOURNE ST. IVES**TO****LOUISA CLIFTON.**

London, Grosvenor Street.

LOUISA!—My dear, my kind, my affectionate Louisa!—My friend!—
What shall I say? How shall I begin?
I am going to rend your heart.—

Keep this letter from the sight of Mrs. Clifton: if she have not already been told, do not let her know such a letter exists—

exists—Oh this brother!—But he is not your brother—Error so rooted, so malignant, so destructive exceeds all credibility!

He came to me yesterday morning, as was his custom. There was something in his look which, could I but have read it, was exceedingly descriptive of the workings of his heart. It was painful to see him. He endeavoured to smile and for a moment to talk triflingly, but could not. He was in a tremor; his mouth parched, his lips white.

His next essay was to philosophise; but in this attempt too he was entirely at fault.

The passions are all sympathetic, and none more so than this of trepidation. I cannot recollect what the ideas were that passed hastily through my mind; but I know

know he excited much alarm, doubt, and I believe suspicion.

But, though he had found all this difficulty to begin, having begun he recovered himself very surprisingly. His colour returned, his voice became firm, his ideas clear, his reasoning energetic, and his manner commanding. He seemed to mould my hopes and apprehensions as he pleased, to inspire terror this moment, and the excess of confidence the next.

Louisa, my heart bleeds to say it, but his purposes were vile, his hypocrisy odious, and—I must forbear, and speak of foul deeds in fair terms. I know not how many prejudices rise up to warn me; one that I am a woman, or rather a girl; another that I am writing to the man's sister;

sister; a third that she is my friend, and so on with endless et ceteras. No matter that truth is to this friend infinitely more precious than a brother. I may be allowed to feel indignation, but not to express my feeling.

But the most distressing, the most revolting part of all is, that he harangued like the apostle of truth, the name of which he vilely prophaned, in favour of the basest, most pitiful, most contemptible of vices; the mere vain-glory of seduction. He has not even so much as the gratification of sensual appetite to plead in his excuse. I am wrong; it was not vain glory. Vanity itself, contemptible as such a stimulus would have been, was scarcely a secondary motive. It was something worse; it was revenge.

My

My mind has been wholly occupied in retracing his past behaviour; I can think on no other subject, and every trait which recollection adds is a confirmation of this painful idea. He does not wish to marry me, and I almost doubt whether he ever did, at least fully and unre-servedly.

He came to me, Louisa, and began with painting the torments of delay and the pangs of jealousy, which he endeavoured to excuse; and concluded with a bold appeal to my justice; a daring, over-awing, confounding appeal. He called upon me at my peril, and as I respected truth and virtue, to deny his claim.

And what was this claim?—I was his wife!—In every pure and virtu-
ous

ous sense his wife; and he demanded the privilege of a husband!—Demanded, Louisa!—Demanded!—And demanded it in such a tone, with such rapid, overbearing, bold expressions, and such an apparent consciousness of right, that for a moment my mind was utterly confused!

Not that it ceded; no, not an instant. I knew there was an answer, a just and irrefragable one, but I could not immediately find it. He perceived my disorder, and you cannot imagine what a shameless and offensive form his features assumed! I know not what he would not instantly have attempted, had not, while I was endeavouring to awake from my lethargy, Mrs. Clarke come in! She brought me a letter—It was sent express!—

prefs!—The hand writing was Frank's! Agitated as I was, suspicion influenced me, and I retreated a few steps—I opened the letter, and the first words I saw were—"Beware of Mr. Clifton."—

It contained only half a dozen lines, and I read on. What follows were its contents——

"Beware of Mr. Clifton!—Had I
"not good cause, madam, I would not
"be so abrupt an accuser: but I am
"haunted, tortured by the dread of
"possibilities, and therefore send this
"away express—Beware of Mr. Clif-
"ton!—I will not be long after the let-
"ter, and I will then explain why I have
"written what to you may appear so
"strange.

"F. HENLEY.

Think,

Think, Louisa, what must be the effect of such a letter, coming at such a moment!—I believe I was in no danger; though, if there be a man on the face of the earth more dangerous than any other, it is surely Clifton. But the watchful spirit of Frank seems placed like my guardian angel, to protect me from all possible harm.

My mind debated for a moment whether it were not wrong to distrust the power of truth and virtue, and not to let Mr. Clifton see I could demolish the audacious sophistry by which he had endeavoured to confound and overwhelm me. But my ideas were deranged, and I could not collect sufficient fortitude. Oh how dangerous is this confusion of the judgment, and how desirable that heavenly presence

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presence of mind which is equal to these great trying occasions! I therefore thought it more prudent to suffer him to depart, and suspect vilely of me, than to encounter the rude contest which he would more audaciously recommence, were I to send away Mrs. Clarke, which he might even misconstrue into a signal of approbation. These fears prevailed, and I desired her to stay, and by my manner told him I wished his absence.

Louisa, how shall I describe my anguish of heart at seeing all those hopes of a mind so extraordinary, for extraordinary it is even in guilt, at once overturned? It was indeed iteration of anguish! What! Can guile so perfectly assume the garb of sincerity? Can hypocrisy

prisy wear so impenetrable a mask? How shall we distinguish? What guide have we? How be certain that the next seeming virtuous man we meet is not a——Well, well, Louisa—I will remember—Brother. My Louisa knows it is not from the person, but from the vice that I turn away with disgust. Would I willingly give her heart a pang? Let her tell me if she can suspect it. She has fortitude, she has affection; but it is an affection for virtue, truth, and justice. She will endeavour to reform error the most obdurate. So will I, so will all that are worthy the high office. But she will not wish me either to marry with or to countenance this error. Marry?—How does my soul shudder at the thought! His reasoning was just; seduction

seduction would have been a petty injury, or rather a blessing, compared to this master evil ! He was most merciful when he meant me, as he thought, most destruction. I have been guilty of a great error. The reformation of man or woman by projects of marriage is a mistaken a pernicious attempt. Instead of being an act of morality, I am persuaded it is an act of vice. Let us never cease our endeavours to reform the licentious and the depraved, but let us not marry them.

The letter had not been delivered more than two hours before Frank arrived.

rived. You may think, Louisa, how hard he had ridden; but he refused to imagine himself fatigued. He brought another letter, which Abimelech had received, but which for some hours he obstinately refused to give up, and for this reason Frank sent off the express. A letter, not of Clifton's writing, but of his invention and sending!

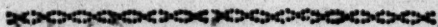
Finding that Frank was likely to prevail on his father to raise the money for Sir Arthur, and obviate all further impediments to our marriage, Clifton, fearful that it should take place, wrote anonymously to Abimelech, to inform him I was in love with Frank, and to encourage him to persist. But read

bovin

I

the

the letter yourself; the following is a true copy of it*.



If such a letter be his, I am sure, Louisa, you will not say I have thought or spoken too unkindly of him; and that it is his we have indubitable proof, though it was anonymous and not in his hand-writing.

You no doubt remember, Louisa, the short story of the English lad, whom your brother hired at Paris. It was written by him, though innocently and without knowing what was intended.

This lad has an aunt, who after having

* The reader has already perused it in Letter XCIV, to which he is referred.

laboured to old age, is now lame, infirm, and in need of support. The active Frank has been with her, has aided her with money and consoled her with kindness. The lad himself was desirous of assisting her; and Frank, willing to encourage industry in the young, gave him some writings to copy at his leisure hours. By this accident he knew the lad's hand-writing.

I forgot to mention, in its proper place, the astonishment of Frank at the sudden change in his father, and the firm resolution he took to discover the cause of this change. The obstinacy of Abimelech was extreme; but Frank was still more pertinacious, more determined, and so unwearied and incessant,

in his attacks on his father, that the old man at last could resist no longer, and shewed him this letter.

From what has preceded, that is from his manner of acting, you may well imagine what the alarms and sensations of Frank were. He brought the letter up with him, for he would not trust it out of his own custody, and immediately went himself to Clifton's stables in search of the lad, brought him to me, and then first shewed him the letter, which that no possible collusion might be alleged he had left in my keeping, and then asked if it were not his handwriting. The lad very frankly and unhesitatingly answered it was; except the direction, which this plotting Clif-

ton had procured to be written by some other person.

Without telling the lad more than was necessary, Frank advised him to quit his service, for that there was something relating to that letter which would certainly occasion a quarrel, and perhaps worse, between him and his master: and, as it would be prudent for him to keep out of the way, he sent him down to Wenbourne-Hill, where the lad is at present.

And now what shall I say to my Louisa? How shall I sooth the feelings of my friend? Do they need soothing? Does she consider all mankind as her
relations

relations and brothers, or does she indeed imagine that one whose principles are so opposite to her own is the only brother she possesses? Will she grieve more for him than she would for any other, who should be equally unfortunate in error? Or does she doubt with me whether grief can in any possible case be a virtue? And if so, is there any virtue of which she is incapable? What is relation, what is brother, what is self, if relation, brother, or self be at war with truth? And does not truth command us to consider beings exactly as they are, without any respect to this relationship, this self?

But I know my Louisa; she will never be impatient under trial, how-

ever severe; nor foolishly repine for the past, though she will strenuously labour for the future.

All good, all peace, all happiness, all [wisdom be with her!

A. W. ST. IVES.

L. E. T.

LETTER XCVII.

LOUISA CLIFTON

TO HER BROTHER

COKE CLIFTON.

SIR,

ON Friday morning I received the original letter from Anna St. Ives, of which the inclosed is a copy; and on the following day about a quarter of an hour before midnight my mother ex-

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together

together because they were noticed, by those who were necessarily acquainted with them, as having a relation to each other; whether real or imaginary, much or little I do not pretend to determine; but I will relate the facts and leave them to your own reflection; and I will forbear all colouring, that I may not be suspected of injustice.

My mother as you know has been daily declining, and was indeed in a very feeble state. She seemed rather more cheerful that morning than she had been lately, and at her particular request I went to visit the wife of farmer Beardmore, who is a worthy but poor woman, and who being at present dejected, in consequence of poverty and ill health, my mother thought she might

be

be more benefited by the kindness of the little relief we could afford her if delivered by me, than if sent by a less soothing and sympathetic hand. I should hope, sir, it would be some consolation to you to learn that my mother's active virtue never forsook her, while memory and mind remained. But of this you are the best judge.

While I was gone the postman brought the letter of my friend; and as her letters were always read to my mother, and as I likewise have made it a rule and a duty not to have any secrets to conceal from her, or indeed from any body, she had no scruple to have the letter opened, because she expected to find consolation and hope: for, till the arrival of this, the letters of Anna St.

Ives have lately been all zealous in your praise.

I will leave you, sir, to imagine the effect which a letter beginning as this did must have on a mind and body worn to such a tremulous state of sensibility. Coming as it did first into my mother's hands, the very caution which the benevolent heart of Anna dictated produced the effect she most dreaded. My mother had still however a sufficient portion of her former energy to hear it to the end.

In about an hour after this happened I returned, and found her in extreme agitation of mind. I neglected no arguments, no efforts to calm her sensations; and I succeeded so far that after a time she seemed to be tolerably resigned.

She

She could not indeed forget it, and the subject was revived by her several times during the day.

My chief endeavour was to lead her thoughts into that train which, by looking forward to the progress of virtue, is most consoling to the mind of virtue.

She seemed at last fatigued, and about eleven o'clock at night fell into a doze. About a quarter before twelve I perceived her countenance distorted; I was alarmed; I spoke to her and received no answer; I endeavoured to excite attention or motion, but in vain. A paralytic stroke had deprived her of sensation. In this state she remained four-and-twenty hours, and about midnight departed.

I have

I have thought it strictly incumbent on me to relate these circumstances. But I should consider myself as very highly culpable did I seek to aggravate, or to state that as certainty which can never be any thing more than conjecture. My mother was so enfeebled that we began to be in daily apprehension of her death. I must not however conceal that the thought of your union with Anna St. Ives had been one of her principal pleasures, ever since she had supposed it probable; and that she had spoken of it incessantly, and always with that high degree of maternal affection and cheering hope which you cannot but know was congenial to her nature.

The disappointment itself was great,
but

but the turpitude that attended it much greater. This I did not endeavour to palliate. How could I? I have told you I had no resource for consolation, either for myself or her, but in turning, like Anna St. Ives, from the individual to the whole.

I would endeavour to say something that should shew you the folly of such conduct; for the folly of it is even more excessive than the vice; but, not to mention the state of my own mind at this moment, I despair of producing any effect, since Anna St. Ives herself, aided by so many concurring motives, has failed in the generous and disinterested attempt.

I imagine you will be down at the funeral. Perhaps it is proper. I cannot

not say, for indeed I do not very well understand many of what are called the proprieties of custom. I own I am weak enough to feel some pain at meeting you, under the present circumstances. But, since it is necessary I should act and aid you in various family departments, if you should come down, I will not yield to these emotions, but considering you as an erring brother, will endeavour to perform what duty requires.

L. CLIFTON.

P. S. Previous to this I wrote three different letters, but they were all as I fear too expressive of those strong sensations which I have found it very difficult

difficult to calm. I destroyed them,
 not because they were wrong, but
 lest they should produce a wrong ef-
 fect.

LET-

LETTER XCVIII.

COKE CLIFTON

TO HIS SISTER

LOUISA CLIFTON.

MADAM,

London, Dover Street.

I HAVE received your very lenient, equitable, calumniating, insulting letter; and I would have you put it down in your memorandum-book that I will carefully remember the obligation. It perfectly accords with your sublime ideas

ideas of justice to decide before you have heard both parties; and it is equally consistent with your notions of sisterly affection that you should pass sentence on a brother. What is a brother, or all he may have to say, to you; who, more infallible than the holy father himself, have squared a set of rules of your own, by which you judge as you best know how?

Your insinuations concerning the death of my mother are equally charitable, and I have already learnt them by rote. Yes, madam, assure yourself they will not be forgotten. Any suspense of judgment would have ill become a lady so clear sighted. However possible it may be that Anna St. Ives may herself have been imposed upon, and I both ignorant

ignorant and innocent of this forged letter, yet for you to have entertained any doubts in my favour would have partaken too much of the fogs of earth for so inspired and celestial a lady.

But I must tell you, madam, since you can so readily forego equity in a brother's behalf, I can and will be as ready to forget and cast off the sister. I never yet was or will be injured with impunity: I would have you note down that.

I mean to be at Rose-Bank tomorrow or the day after, to attend the funeral and take such order as my affairs may require; and though I have as little affection for your company as you have for mine, I imagine it will be quite necessary for you to be there: not only
that

that you should be present to execute all orders, but likewise to listen to a few hints which I shall probably think proper to communicate.

In the mean time, madam, be industrious to propagate the report, if you think fit, that I have caused anonymous letters to be written to Sir Arthur's steward, have endeavoured to betray Anna St. Ives, and have been the death of my mother. Spread the agreeable intelligence I say as quickly and as widely as you can, and when you meet me you shall receive a brother's thanks.

C. CLIFTON.

END OF VOLUME V.

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